



Adobe RGB Versus sRGB – Which Color Space Should You Be Using and Why

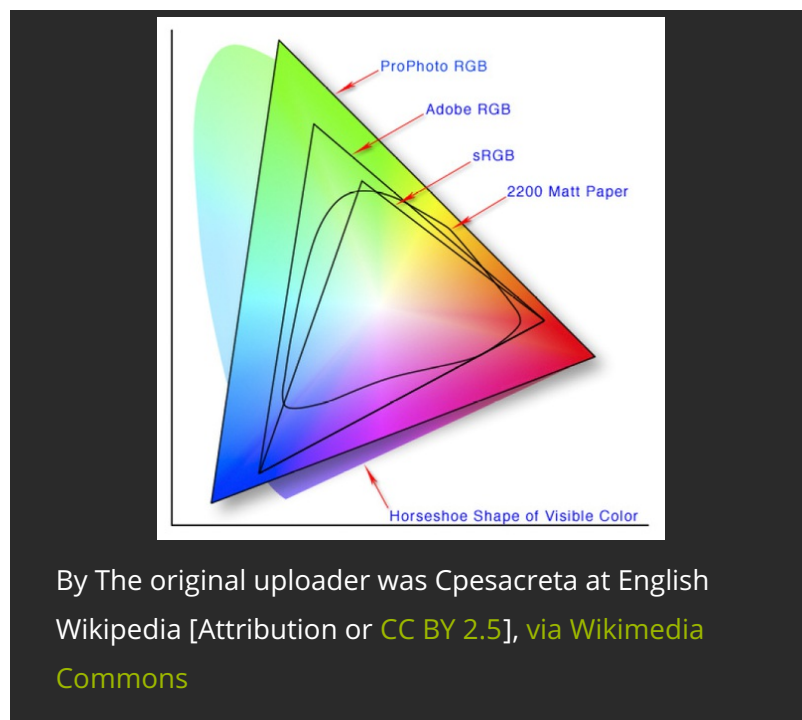
A Post By: **Kunal Malhotra**

How frequently have you been to your camera settings to switch between Adobe RGB and sRGB color space? Are you even aware of what these terms mean, or what exactly is a color space? Even I was unaware of these technical terms until a few years back but I quickly realized their importance.

What is a color space?

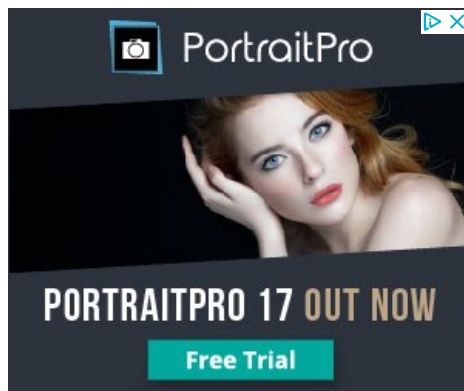
A color space is a part of the color gamut, which is basically the universe of color tones. So you can assume different color spaces to be planets of different sizes. Out of many planets, Adobe RGB and sRGB are two most commonly used color spaces in photography.

Depending on your preferences, you can choose the desired color space and get the best possible result out of it.



What are Adobe RGB and sRGB color spaces?

Adobe RGB is a bigger color space than sRGB as it is comprised of many more variations of color tones. This is one of the reasons that Adobe RGB monitors are vastly used by photographers – they can display more colors as compared to an sRGB monitor.



Monitors and printers

Adobe RGB monitors are used by a majority of modern day printer operators as well because they are capable of showing what a CMYK (cyan magenta yellow and key or black) printer color profile can produce. This helps the printer operator to ensure that colors that are being displayed on the Adobe RGB monitor shall be very close to the print that comes out of the CMYK color space printer (used for magazines and publications).

So being a photographer it makes sense that you use an Adobe RGB monitor so that you can edit your photos and see the actual colors that will come out in the prints.

Whereas, if you are sure that you will not get your photos printed in the near future then it does not make any sense to use an Adobe RGB monitor. If you only take photos for yourself or to upload them to the web, then an sRGB monitor is ideal for your purposes.



Camera shooting color space

But in order to view the actual colors of Adobe RGB or sRGB color space on your monitor, you need to capture the photo in that particular color space in the first place.

Unless you capture a photo in the required color space, be it Adobe RGB or sRGB, you cannot use that photo to its full potential. Shooting photos in the larger Adobe RGB color space allow you to capture more color tones, thus helping you see accurate colors on Adobe RGB monitors and in the prints. Whereas clicking in sRGB color space allows you to upload images to the web without any change in colors.

While shooting in one of these two color spaces each has their own advantages, there are few disadvantages as well.



Setting your camera color space.

Advantages and Disadvantages of shooting in Adobe RGB

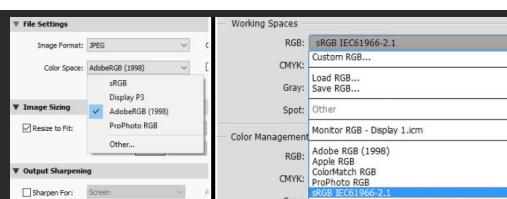
Advantages:

1. You get to capture a wider range of color tones in your photos.
2. This color space is capable of displaying color tones that come out of a CMYK printer, thus ideal color space if you print your photos.

Disadvantages:

1. When you upload a photo captured in Adobe RGB color space on the web, the colors get desaturated (and can look "off").
2. Adobe RGB monitors are costly, so in order to edit Adobe RGB color space image, you need to invest a lot in a monitor.

NOTE: You can convert an Adobe RGB color profile image into sRGB color space using software such as Photoshop and Lightroom.



Left: While exporting photos in Lightroom, you get the option to choose the color

space. Right: In Photoshop, you can go to Color Settings and select the required option as your working color space.

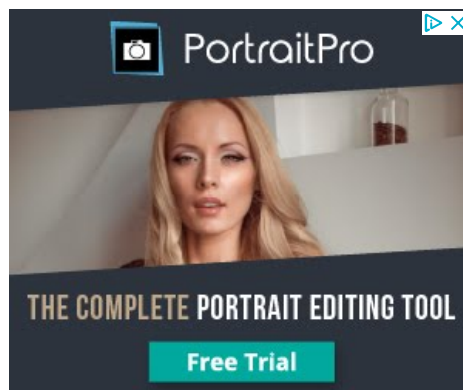
Advantages and Disadvantages of shooting in sRGB

Advantages:

1. When you upload a photo shot in sRGB color space, the colors remain the same and do not get desaturated, unlike an Adobe RGB image.
2. A majority of monitors in the world use the sRGB color space and are not that expensive, unlike Adobe RGB monitors. This ensures that the colors that you experience on your monitor would be **almost the same on any other sRGB monitor**.

Disadvantages:

1. As the color tones in sRGB are less compared to Adobe RGB, you do not get accurate colors in your prints.
2. If you submit your photos for photography contests, there are chances that those photos will be viewed on an Adobe RGB monitor. This might reduce your chances of winning as a photograph captured and edited in Adobe RGB will look more pleasing to the judges.

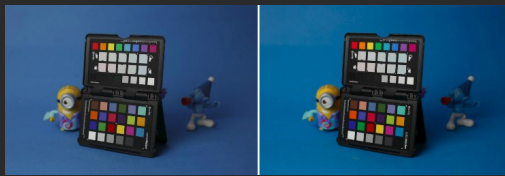


Conclusion

Adobe RGB or sRGB, which color space to choose while shooting?

If you are a photographer who prints your photos often and you want to ensure that the colors are accurate in your prints, then you must shoot in Adobe RGB color space. Shooting photos in sRGB color space might give you a variation in colors that you see on your monitor and in the final prints. Also if you participate in online photography contests, it is safe to capture and edit photos in Adobe RGB color space.

But if you only capture photos to upload them on the web, then shooting in the sRGB color space is the ideal choice for you. If you upload Adobe RGB color space photos to the web, you will notice that colors get desaturated.

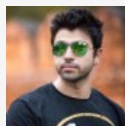


Left: This is how your photo gets desaturated when you upload Adobe RGB color space photo to the web. Right: When you upload sRGB color space photos, you get correct colors as seen here.

Nonetheless, to be on the safe side you can shoot photos in the Adobe RGB color space. If needed you can always use the file for prints, and if you wish to upload to the web then you can simply convert the color space using Adobe Photoshop or Lightroom.

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Kunal Malhotra is a photography enthusiast whose passion for photography started 6 years back during his college days. Kunal is also a photography blogger, based out of Delhi, India. He loves sharing his knowledge about photography with fellow aspiring photographers by writing **regular posts on his blog**. Some of his favorite genres of photography are product, street, fitness, and architecture.

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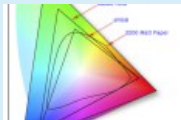
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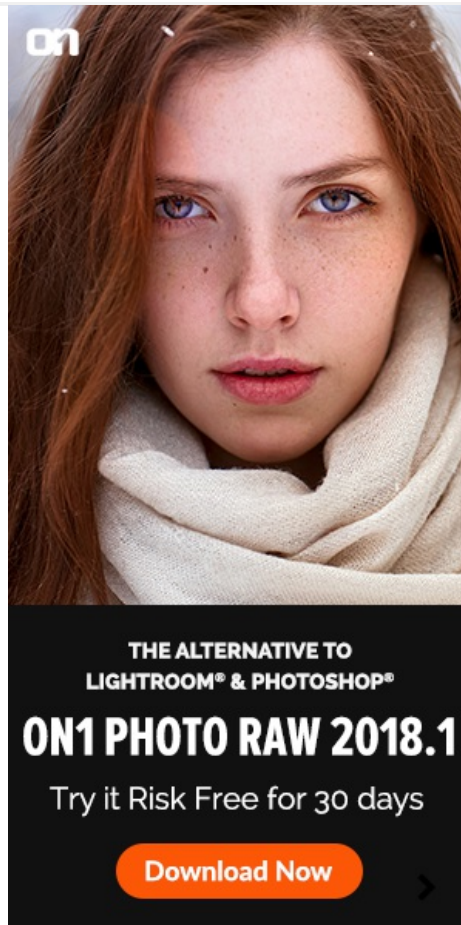
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