

Overview

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Color Mixing and Calibration

Four standard colors (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black) are blended to create all the colors in the gamut of a printer. A printer mixes colors by printing four layers of a page or an image, one in each color. If the printer registration is not set correctly, the images do not line up properly and the colors appear wrong. In addition, the printer must be calibrated to ensure that all its systems are functioning correctly and that it is in a known good state.

By using the color information described in its color space, each device determines the amount of cyan, magenta, yellow, or black to use. Dots of each color are printed in overlapping patterns that, when interpreted by your eyes, blend the colors appropriately. To ensure the colors are created accurately, the color planes must be perfectly aligned. If they are not, you might see *moire patterns*, unintended patterns in the printed images, or poorly blended colors, which are especially noticeable on the edges of your images.

Color printers must be calibrated regularly, in some cases daily, to ensure that the colors they produce are consistent. In addition, follow the recommended printhead maintenance procedures and schedule to ensure that the printer operates optimally. Even when a printer is calibrated correctly, its gamut is much smaller than that of any monitor, so images do not look the same when they are printed as they do when they are displayed on a monitor.

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