



Gamut

The Colour Management Newsletter

Review of MonacoOPTIX XR PRO

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Five years ago the only person that required a calibrated monitor was the one responsible for creating your high-resolution scans. But, today things are different, only a handful of images are being drum scanned and more importantly, we are not utilizing the skills and training of that scanner operator to ensure our images are properly colour corrected for their final destination.

The majority of images used in today's digital workflow are downloaded from the web, captured on desktop scanners or captured via a digital camera, and the bulk of these images require significant colour corrections. So, how do we, the non-colour-correct-by-the-numbers-majority, ensure we are sending accurate images to our clients or to press? The simple answer is to purchase a monitor calibration package.

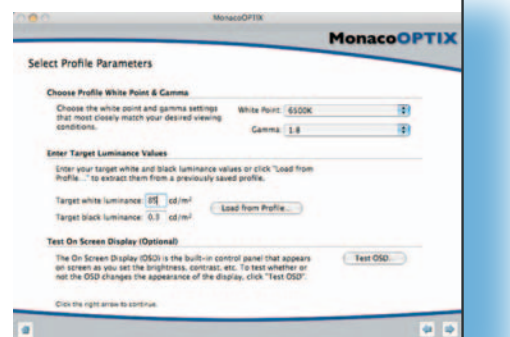
Recommendation:

My recommendation, based on extensive field-testing, is the MonacoOPTIX XR Pro. I have compared this product to Gretagmacth's Eyeone display and Eyeone PM, to the aging ColorVison OptiCAL and Spyder combo, to Integrated Color's BaslCColor Display and the LaCie Blue-eye system. The other systems all have their merits but only the Monaco product has the simple interface and a set of features not found in the other products.

The Features:

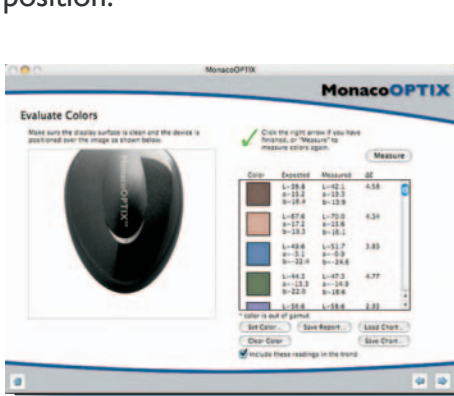
The first thing you will like about Monaco's products is their straightforward interface. They use a wizard like system that steps you through the process. Other products leave you wondering where to start and what to do first. The waters of colour management are muddy enough and the last thing you need is an overly complicated product that won't get used because of fear of making things worse.

You begin the process by selecting the parameters of the profile. If you are using a light booth then you can use an advance feature to measure the colour temperature of your light booth and use that measurement as the colour temperature for your monitor, allowing a closer match. The software also checks to see if the OSD (On Screen Display) isn't interfering with the values being measured.



After calibration the software measures a series of coloured swatches to create an ICC profile for your display. Once your system is calibrated and profiled you move on to the Validation function of the software. In this stage the software is examining the gamut and accuracy of your monitor.

This is a feature that is only available on the Pro version but is worth every penny. I use this feature to test different colour temperatures and gamma settings to see which will yield the best result. It will also tell me if a monitor is ready to be sent out to pasture or at least moved into a less demanding position.



After you select Save Chart in the Evaluate Colours screen you are presented with a trending graph as shown below. This feature will average all the measurements taken in the Evaluate Colours step and plot it on a graph. This will show you how your CRT or LCD is doing over time and track monitor drift.



PACKAGES:

MonacoOPTIX XR

MonacoOPTIX XR is the base-profiling package for photographers, graphic artists, and creative professionals. The package includes Monaco's software and the MonacoOPTIX XR colourimeter. Pricing starts at \$399.99.

MonacoOPTIX XR PRO

MonacoOPTIX XR PRO edition is designed for the professional. It is ideal for workgroup situations and customers who demand expert levels of control, flexibility, and the highest quality profiles. The package includes the MonacoOPTIX XR colourimeter and Monaco's profiling software with workgroup support and expert controls. Pricing starts at \$599.99.

With the way images are being captured it is essential to have some form of monitor calibration to ensure you are seeing an accurate representation of the image. We can no longer rely on the scanner operator to send us files that are ready for press, that job now lies in the hands of the digital photographer and graphic designer.

