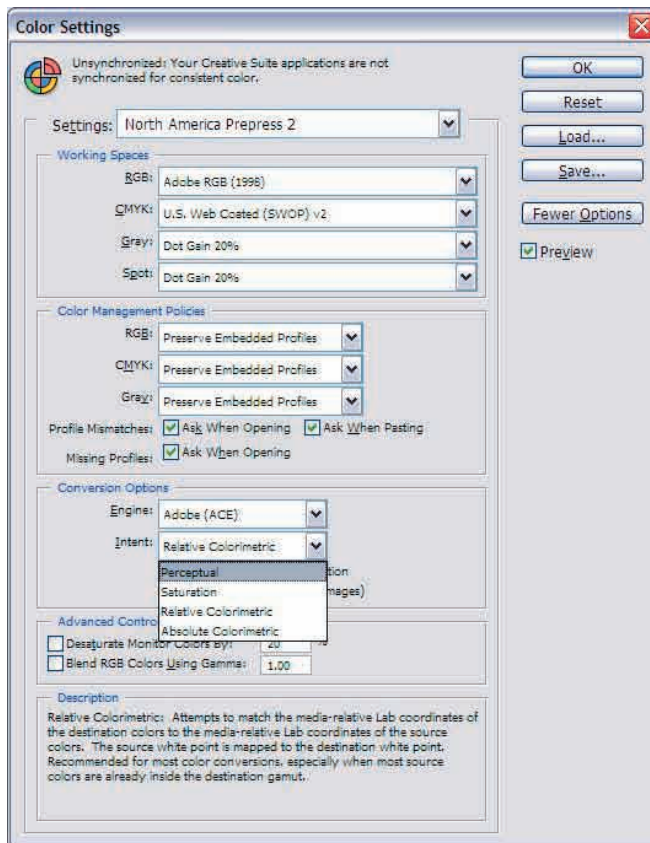


Color Settings and Color Management in Photoshop



Color management sets up your rules for handling color. As I mentioned earlier, there are two areas we're concerned with—how the computer uses color in controlling the display, and how Photoshop works with color in the computer. Basically, this is all controlled by running a monitor calibration, preferably through using one of the many calibrators, or by running the built-in software that comes with your computer. In my opinion, the calibration device is preferable to the built-in software;

it gives you a consistent standard that is not dependent on your personal interpretation of color patches. (Run your system's built-in software once and you'll see what I mean.) Once the computer is playing nice with color, you have to set up Photoshop to display color at an industry standard.

Go to Edit>Color Settings, and click the "More Options" button. The detailed color management policies are there for you to see. From the Settings pull-down menu, select "North America Prepress 2" and you're done.

You'll notice in the diagram to the left I've highlighted "Perceptual" rendering for Intent. This is how we've set things up in the very recent past. Without going into the details of what these policies do, let's just say there's not much practical difference between Relative Colorimetric and Perceptual Intent, and in the last year or so I've been flipping between them. Currently, I'm using Perceptual. Close the dialog box and you're done.

Save Button

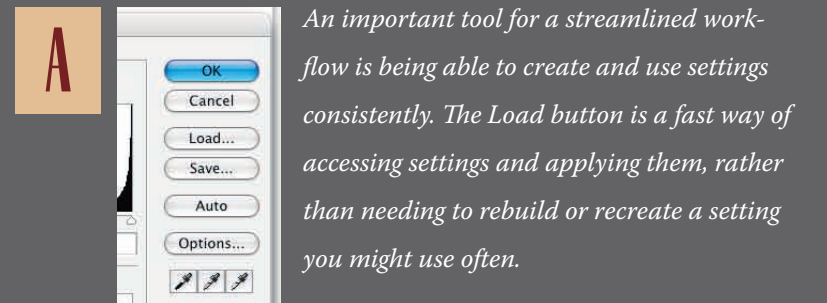
Before we go any further, let's take a quick look at the Save button in the dialog box. Hitting the Save button saves the settings you have just chosen. If you started with "North America Prepress 2" and changed the Intent to "Perceptual," you'll notice the top pull-down window selection has changed to "Custom." Hit "Save"

and you can make a name for the settings you've made and add that to the pull-down menu. If your settings get mysteriously changed, you can simply go into the Settings pull-down menu and select your preferred personal settings. I mention the Save button here, because it appears in almost every dialog in Photoshop, and by getting into the habit of saving your settings for future use, you can develop an incredibly powerful way to work fast and efficiently.

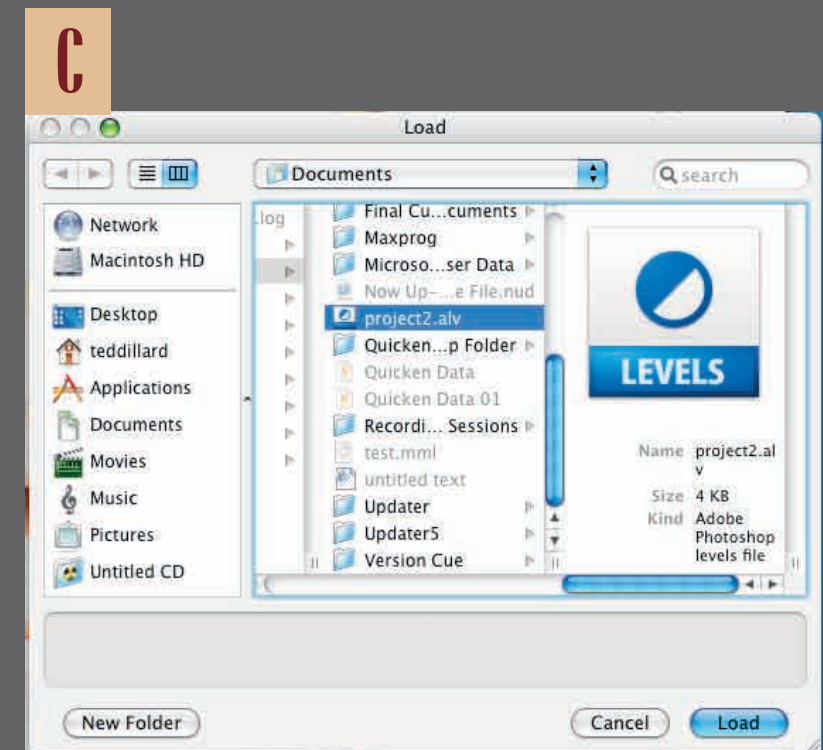
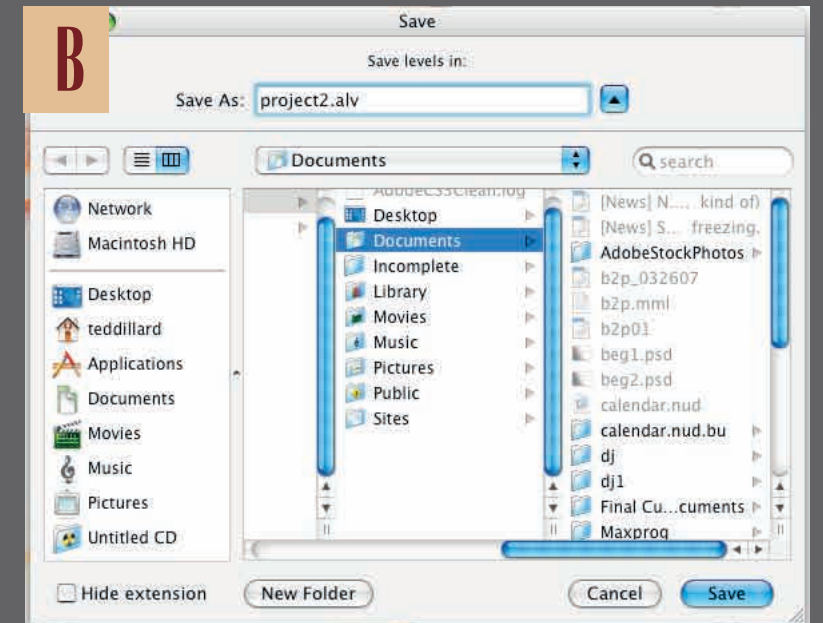
Load Button

You'll also notice the Load button (A). The Load button is a key to working with exact settings consistently. When you use the Save button, you save a small text file on your computer, wherever you've told it to save. (B) In this example I've saved a Levels adjustment in my Documents folder, called project2.alv (the "alv" extension is the Levels identifier; each settings file has its own extension) (C).

When I hit "Load," I'm taken to a dialog that asks me what I want to load for a Levels file. This gives me



An important tool for a streamlined workflow is being able to create and use settings consistently. The Load button is a fast way of accessing settings and applying them, rather than needing to rebuild or recreate a setting you might use often.



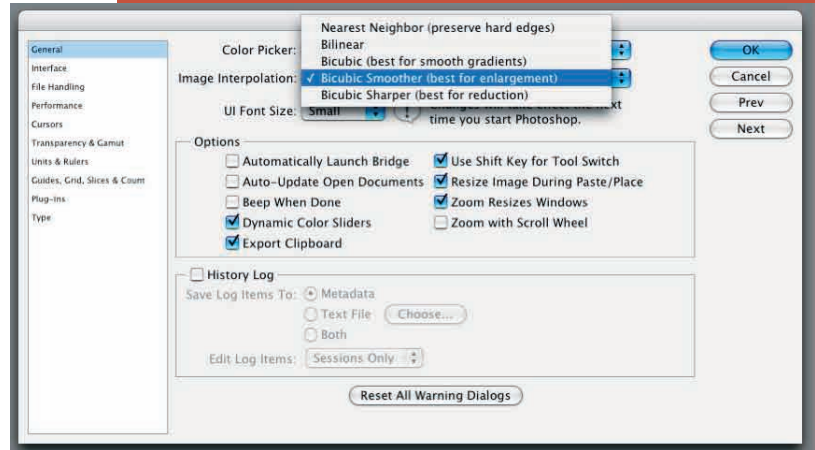
the chance to load my settings file from virtually any location.

For example, if you're just working on one workstation, it's important to organize these settings in a sensible way. In Documents, I like to set up a folder called "work settings." If you are moving between workstations, (in a school environment, at home, or work), you can copy these settings and load them from a jump drive. In a networked environment, you can save standard settings in a central location, (on the server, for example), and everyone on the team can have access to the same settings.

For example, I have a Curve I like to apply to my Olympus camera file. I "Save" it to my "work settings" folder at home and copy it to my jump drive. When I get to work, I load that curve setting from my jump drive and start working on my file. Also, I can just copy the entire "work settings" folder to my work computer and load it from there, too.

Preferences

Under Photoshop>Preferences (Edit>Preferences in Windows), you'll find all the specifications of how Photoshop will handle things. Start with "General" and scroll through each window using the "Next" button, and you see each personal control setting.



Adobe Photoshop preferences are where you will find most of the options for how Photoshop handles image files. Familiarize yourself with the available options to ensure you are getting the most out of the program, the RAW workflow, and your images.

In the General selection, I've chosen the Image Interpolation pull-down, and set it to "Bicubic Smoother," because I frequently size digital images up. (You can read more about this on page 72.)

I mention this because, at some point, you may need to look under the hood and set something up, or reset something to get back to how you like to work. The setting that I change most frequently is the Brush display settings (I add the "Show Crosshair" option), but that's about the extent of my tampering here. Take a look through everything to familiarize yourself with the Preferences options, but my advice is to not mess with it until you need to, unless you are sure of your preferred settings.