

Successes and Failures: A Case Study of Implementing ICC Color Management Across Harvard University Art Museums

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Abstract

Museums and cultural institutions are under great pressure to digitize and disseminate their vast collections of cultural heritage for a broad audience. For digitization, capture of a broad variety of source materials is required with numerous device types with a scan-once constraint. Image fidelity and spatial resolution must be of the highest level. Likewise, dissemination requires accommodation for an equally vast host of display types and uses ranging from simple web viewing to high quality continuous tone and halftone output.

To accomplish this, I have put in place an ICC workflow to insure color and tone fidelity across varied input/output devices. The technologies available today should mostly enable one to accomplish these goals. However, the practical implementation of these technologies has proven to be difficult, and frequently do not live up to their claims. This paper will discuss our implementation experiences of the ICC workflow, indicate where they excel and fail, and offer challenges to the scientific community for improvement.