

Calibrating Your Monitor

If there one thing that's certain about photos on the internet, it's that nobody is seeing exactly the same thing as you. In general, most screens are too bright, and have whatever default colour the monitor happens to be set up with in the factory. Some are great, others not so much. As the monitor gets older, these colours change too. It's more of an issue with older monitors, and less so with the more modern LED, but still these colours change over time.

There's also the matter of print matching. If you've ever printed, and been dissatisfied with the print, it could be that your screen is fooling you when you're editing. You will also need to calibrate your printer or use specific paper profiles from the manufacturers. That will be covered in a separate set of notes regarding printing.

There is a way to get your screen to a known standard, and doing this means that you know you have good representative colour and brightness on your screen, and that you've made a step toward better prints. This is screen or monitor calibration.

To calibrate your screen, you need a device that sits on your screen, and measures the colour being displayed. The Club has a calibration kit that is available for members to hire. See any of the Committee to hire it.

You need to install the software that comes with the device, you are then ready to calibrate your monitor.

Make sure you are calibrating your screen in the conditions you normally use your computer. It is no good calibrating your screen in the middle of the day when you do most of your processing in the evening. The ambient light will be different.

Attach the calibrating device so that it is hanging in the centre of your monitor and follow the instructions on the screen. The device will cycle through different colours measuring the light levels for each. The software will then build a profile based on those measurements. The software will then provide a comparison of before and after calibration. There may not be much difference, depending on how long ago you previously calibrated your monitor. You will then be prompted to save the profile.

Lightroom, Photoshop and colour managed browsers like Safari will use this profile when you view images, allowing you to edit and process images with the best colour rendition.

If you use more than one monitor, you will need to calibrate each one separately. Ideally you should calibrate your monitor(s) no less than once a month.