

# Publication Review

**Title:**

CMYK Color – Visual and Digital References for Professionals

**Author:**

Co-authored by Gerald Fields and Gary Nichols  
Jerry J. Waite, EdD - Contributing Editor,

**Publication Date:**

2003 – Metro Publishing, Houston, Texas

ISBN: 0-933745-17-6

**Supporting Material:**

- Internet Site – [www.cmykcolor.org](http://www.cmykcolor.org)
- CD with book
- Toolkit with book

**Reviewer:**

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**Reviewer Background:**

48 years related Graphic Arts Industry/Pre-Press/plant management experience.  
Formal 7 year British Apprenticeship in Stone Lithography.  
Last 21 years in technical education and training for the Graphic Arts Industry.  
ISO Quality Control Audit reviewer.

Design/Develop and Deliver Provincial Apprenticeship Training Program  
Current responsibility for College level technical training, specializing in  
Electronic Pre-Press.

**The Book:**

Following the clear pathway this publication lays out towards solving the ongoing frustrations of a rapidly changing industry, will quickly save its cost in late night hours, too much bad coffee, and a great deal of Pepto-Bismal.

The book aims to provide readily digestible information on complex pre-press processes. It is pleasantly free from irritating acronyms and jargon. The authors feel, and rightly so, that much of the literature on the process is clouded in obfuscation and mystery – to no particular benefit to those involved. The major strengths of the book are centered round

the in-depth examples and clear explanations provided for guidance. The authors have clearly spent a considerable amount of time and effort in identifying and isolating the most frequent causes of failure to maintain color fidelity throughout the entire production process.

In some ways the book is reminiscent of the “Graphic Master” series, in its no-nonsense, utilitarian presentation of relevant information, although CMYK focuses on the pre-press aspect of the production cycle. This is not a “dumbed-down, Pre-press for Idiots”, yet the book manages to present its content in concise, straightforward descriptions of most of the factors which affect the quality of color reproduction.

The book contains a very functional tool kit which is made up of a mechanical screen value chart on mylar, sample photograph and color target, as well as cutout masks for isolating the over 1,700 color swatches which are included in the book along with their formulas.

The authors have provided a real bonus in the accompanying CD, which contains a unique feature called “Production Conversations”. These discussions consist of technical forums composed of a cross-section of high-profile industry experts, whose knowledge and experience span the gamut of the production process. There is a great deal to be learned just by listening in on the discussion of the all too familiar every-day production glitches. Isn’t it comforting to think that other people face the same production problems?

Now this is different – take note Quark – the authors offer a free upgrade to the CD in which they will add several articles related to the technology. These articles are scheduled to include:

- Halftones & Duotones
- Direct-to-Plate Guidelines
- PDF and PostScripted Files
- Email Attachments and File Transfer Protocol (FTP)
- Separation Setup: Additional Comments
- Digital Camera Captures
- Exact Color Matching (Spectrophotometer)
- Photoshop's Working Spaces

The list of potential pitfalls encountered on a regular basis by industry production personnel would make your hair stand on end – assuming that you have any left after dealing with the technical *faux pas* committed by uninformed clients.

Highlights of the book/toolkit package are some of the most complete and understandable articles on “Press Profiling” and “Dot Gain” (tonal value increase) that this reviewer has come across. A very useful and current listing of Internet links and resources is included in both the book and on disk.

Finally, the most difficult of all aspects of color reproduction is undeniably that of "Flesh Tones." CMYK Color has gone to great lengths to not only provide an invaluable visual flesh tone reference for people who are pink in color, but it also addresses the equally difficult task of reproducing believable flesh tones for African, Oriental and Hispanic subjects.

Presentation and format of the book has been as painstakingly considered, as has its content. The book is wire bound, and printed on extremely high quality, robust stock to preserve the tonal values of the images and to avoid the damage which will inevitably come about from the occasional coffee spill. CMYK Color has a heavy gauge plastic cover and fits snugly into a protective case. The book lies flat, but does not fold back on itself easily due to the lack of cooperation of the outer plastic cover.

This reviewer was a little disappointed not to find some historical discussion which might have charted the evolution of image preparation for reproduction, but there are other sources for that type of information, and after all this is a no-nonsense **working** book.

**Conclusion:**

The book/toolkit package has been carefully planned and assembled to provide a resource for a wide potential audience. It will serve the needs of the working professional and at the same time provide an excellent resource for academic use in course preparation at college and university level, and as a potential "Lab Library Text." However, for those students who are serious about enhancing their knowledge of an incredibly complex industry, this is a recommended purchase. To wax poetic, it is that rarest of resources - a working professional's reference which can be readily understood by the neophyte.

It is undeniably expensive, but its utility far outweighs its cost.