

HOW TO ENSURE YOUR PICTURES PROJECT AS WELL AS POSSIBLE

Everyone wants their photographs to look like they expect when they see them projected at club meetings. Just as photographs look somewhat different when printed, they also can be expected to look different, in certain respects, when projected. The images are very much larger (so any defects are magnified), the brightness is likely not what you are accustomed to and the surface of the screen is a quite different medium from the usual glossy, bright, computer screen. Note also that even the best of projection system may have some minor weakness. Beyond those fixed factors, there are a number of things you can do to make your images project as well as possible. They are:

- Correctly set the brightness and contrast settings of your computer screen.
- Process images in a dim or darkened room.
- Calibrate your home system. (Calibration is the use of a measurement device - hardware/ sensor, and related software, to adjust the colours of your computer screen so they are accurate. The club regularly calibrates the projector and laptop combination using such a device, called a Spyder. The club even has one it can lend to club members for an initial or trial calibration.)
- Set up colour management in the photo processing program you use. This means processing images using the near universal standard of sRGB.
- Make your images as good as possible. .

While this can all be a very complicated subject - with many technical terms - what follows is a brief discussion of each of the factors:

BRIGHTNESS AND CONTRAST SCREEN SETTINGS: An important issue, related to calibration, and one that everyone should consider . This means adjusting the brightness and contrast settings of your screen for a good balance of tones between black and whites. As much as your particular screen allows, detail should be apparent in both the very dark parts of your pictures and the very light areas. This is very important for more than reproducing important details. These settings can even affect how your colours look. Here is a good basic guide < <http://blog.codinghorror.com/computer-display-calibration-101/> >. And here a more detailed process: < http://www.galacticmag.com/monitor/adjusting-brightness-and-contrast_o1.html >

BACKGROUND LIGHTING: It is best to work at your computer in a dim or even dark environment. This may not be possible in your situation. Consider though that we view projected images in near darkness. Working on your images in fairly bright light means that you probably have your computer brightness and contrast settings set far off the recommended levels.

CALIBRATION: Serious photographers routinely calibrate using a mechanical device (the hardware) and related software which they have purchased. This is especially important where the images will be printed, projected or viewed by others on the web. Calibration, a major part of which is referred to as

colour profiling, ensures that the colours displayed on your screen match a widely accepted standard. Note that it is advisable to check your brightness and contrast settings even if you use a calibration tool. Here is a good guide to the subject which begins with a review of brightness and contrast (Skip the first part if you wish) < <http://www.cambridgeincolour.com/tutorials/monitor-calibration.htm> >

sRGB and ADOBE SETTINGS : Both your camera and your image processing software allow you to select a colour profile to work in. Without getting into the complexities, sRGB (the recommended setting) is the most universal and is the one used with our club projection setting. Adobe rgb is a setting used primarily by professionals who do fine printing. Adobe rgb images will suffer when projected at club meetings. For more information on this subject see: < <http://www.peachpit.com/articles/article.aspx?p=1315593&seqNum=3> > To set up Color Management in Elements - similar instructions apply to CS or whatever processing software you customarily use.: < <http://helpx.adobe.com/photoshop-elements/using/setting-color-management.html> >

SHOW YOUR BEST IMAGES It is certainly true that well exposed images project well, favouring those that have a good range of tones and sufficient contrast. Pale or so called hi-key images do not show especially well. Images that have blown out high lights (lacking detail in the whites) project terribly. This is also true of over sharpened images

CONCLUSION: You can have a lot of control over how your projected images look. It is though a complex subject. Most of us will only need to consider the subjects mentioned here. If you are interested in learning more, this is a good place to start: < <http://www.northlight-images.co.uk/viewing.html> >

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