

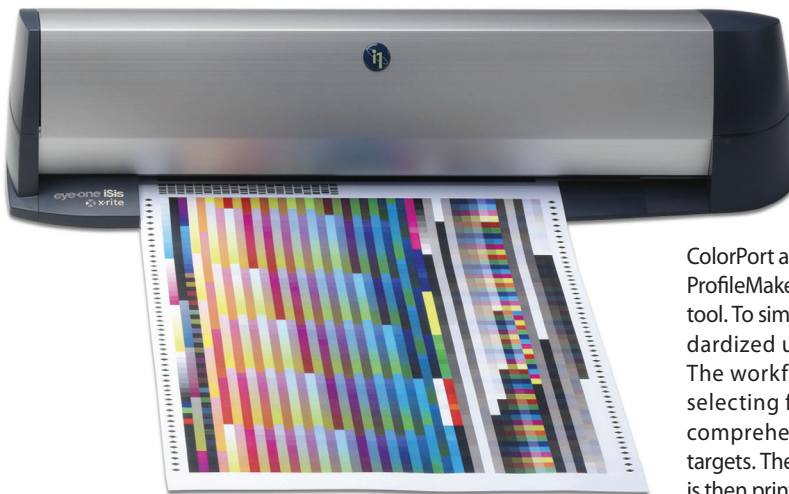
reviews

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X-Rite i1iSis XL

Review by
Steve Baczewski

Automated color chart reader



recently merged, so the packaged software includes two profiling software applications capable of driving the i1iSis XL: X-Rite's

ColorPort and GretagMacbeth's ProfileMaker with its measuring tool. To simplify matters, I standardized using ProfileMaker. The workflow starts by your selecting from ProfileMaker's comprehensive set of test targets. The untagged target is then printed from within the specific application you're using (e.g., Photoshop, Painter, etc.) with all color management off. ProfileMaker's measuring tool drives the i1iSis XL and gives you the unique option to measure the target with and without a UV filter. The target has markers picked up by the reader's sensors to correctly align and feed the target. When you start measuring the target, the i1iSis XL first automatically calibrates itself and then quietly starts scanning the target. You can follow the progress in real time with the measuring-tool software. The scanning results in a text document that you drop in ProfileMaker's Print module, which then builds and saves the ICC profile to the folder with your other paper profiles.

I compared this against the excellent canned profiles of Epson's Stylus Pro 3800. I built both glossy and matte profiles including Epson's Ultra Premium Presentation paper (formerly Enhanced Matte), Velvet Fine Art, and Premium

Luster. Because printer manufacturers only supply profiles for their papers, I incorporated third-party papers, including Crane's Museo Max and Innova's Gloss Black Max. I standardized using one of ProfileMaker's test targets that printed out 912 color patches (more patches doesn't necessarily mean better results.) The i1iSis XL read the target in less than 3 minutes.

The only workflow problems experienced were the intermittent need to reinsert the target due to misalignment, and occasionally I had to re-plug the USB connector before the driver recognized the unit. The profiles produced with the i1iSis XL produced prints with accurate colors—especially elusive ones that give that extra subtle dimensionality to a print. The i1iSis XL profiles also revealed more shadow and highlight detail than the Epson profiles. The prints made using this unit's profiles gave me the closest screen match I've ever seen.

My one beef (caveat) with the packaging of the XL is the lack of a documented workflow for building an ICC profile. X-Rite expects that if you purchase the i1iSis XL, you'll either receive training from your dealership or are already familiar with their workflow—I wasn't. And the lack of documentation led to several phone calls to technical support for clarification. Once learned, however, the process is fast, precise, and reliable and produces beautiful profiles. ■

If you work in a busy graphic production studio that relies on producing precision, customized ICC paper profiles on a frequent basis, the X-Rite i1iSis XL automated chart reader for A3+ and tabloid-size paper handling is a great asset. In combination with ProfileMaker 5 software, it produces accurate ICC profiles and removes the uncertainty of measuring hundreds of color patches by hand. It includes a built-in barcode reader for automated chart identification and can read 2,500 color patches on a single sheet of A3 (13x19") paper within minutes.

Setup requires plugging the unit into a power source and connecting the USB cable to your computer—that's it! The unit has a slender sturdy aluminum case, measures 20.5x6.3x4.7" and weighs 8.6 lbs. It has a built-in spectrophotometer that moves quietly over substrates from 0.08–0.46mm in thickness. There's no provision to adjust for thicker rag papers.

GretagMacbeth and X-Rite

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| PRICE: | \$5,695 |
| FOR: | Mac and Windows |
| FROM: | X-Rite, Inc. |
| PHONE: | 800-248-9748 |
| WEB: | www.xrite.com |
| RATING: | ◆◆◆◆◆ |