

About Assigning & Converting Profiles

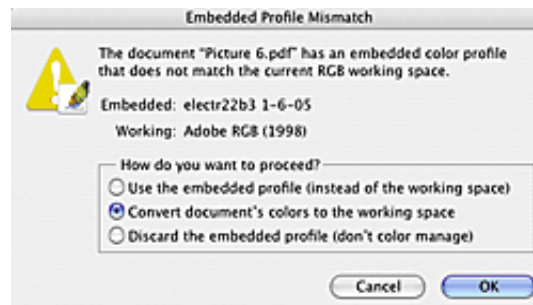
When you **Assign** (tag) a profile to a document, no color values are changed, yet the colors you view on screen may appear very different. Photoshop is translating the colors according to definitions in the profile you assigned. Assigning a profile does not alter the file, except to tag it with the profile.

Whenever you **Convert** a document's profile, although the image appearance is preserved, many color values change and some information may be lost. It may not be visible on the screen or when printed out (that would usually be the case). Yet, just as with changing **Color Modes**, image data is altered and some could be gone forever, and can never be made visible. Therefore, the fewer conversions between color spaces a document goes through, the better. Converting a profile permanently alters the file.

In spite of that: Converting a document to your Working Space for editing, then sometimes converting it for proper output, is a normal part of a **Color Management Workflow**. This final *conversion to profile* may be done in the "Print with preview" dialog box when you select your printer profile from the drop down menu as you send your file to your desktop printer. In this case your color values are only adjusted in the printer driver software, and your file stays in the Working Space. Or, if your file will be sent out to a commercial press, your service bureau should supply you with a profile for their press. You would make this conversion to the supplied profile in CS2 by using the Edit>Convert to profile... command. The new profile is now embedded and the color values have been adjusted to be accurate when printed.

You will encounter Profile Warnings if you have checked any of the "Ask When Opening" boxes in the Color Management Policies area of the Photoshop Color Settings preferences. Please refer to the [Color Settings page](#) for explanations and recommendations.

Profile Warnings



Embedded Profile Mismatch

This may be the best option in a CMYK (prepress) workflow.

Choose this option:

- If you have reason for preserving the color space, (e.g., you need to view or work on a file, then return it to someone who works in a different color space).
- If you open a file already tagged with sRGB, and are going to output this file only to the web, you may choose to stay in sRGB.
- If you get important files from other people or sources tagged with other than your working space, you may wish to view them first by preserving the embedded profile. Then using the Edit>Convert to Profile command, you can preview any changes which may occur by converting to your working space.
- Professionals tend to prefer this option

Use embedded profile

This will usually be the best choice in an RGB workflow.

Your files will be in RGB if they come from a digital camera or a desktop scanner.

Convert to Working Space

Although color values are changed through remapping, the appearance should be exactly the same as with the original document profile. Editing in Adobe RGB (1998), the recommended working space, is preferable due to its wider color range, or gamut.

Discard the profile

Unless you know you need to untag the document, don't use this.

Missing Profile



If a file is untagged and you have no way of knowing what its profile should have been:

- The **best choice**, would be to use the **Leave as is** option, open the file untagged, then use the Edit > "Assign Profile" command to view, with a preview, how the image will look with various profiles. Then apply the one which results in the most pleasing image.

If an untagged file came from a digital camera, chances are its color information resides in a space which is (or is close to) sRGB.

- Your recommended option then: is to **Assign** the sRGB space to it and continue opening the file. If it looks alright, then you can use the Edit > "Convert to Profile" command to convert to your Working Space, or just edit the image in sRGB, particularly if you will only output to the web.
- A quicker option, if you are pretty sure the sRGB space works with the image (or has with similar images), is to use the **Assign profile** option and check (✓) the **"and then convert document to working RGB"** box.

- Leave as is** Probably your best/safest choice if used as noted above. Normally it is not recommended to work on a file without a profile.
- Assign working RGB** You should use this only if you know the file matches your working space, or if you feel lucky.
- Assign profile** If you know what profile works well for your file, choose this option. *Save even more time by checking (✓) the convert document to working RGB, if needed.

Addendum for the confused:

Do not despair, If all this seems like too much extra work, you can go back to the Color Settings preferences in Photoshop and uncheck all the "Ask When Opening" boxes. If you prefer to work in this manner, then it may be safer to change all the Color Management Policies options to "Preserve Embedded Profiles." [Here is what your settings would look like.](#)

[Printer PDF](#) (two pages)