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Graphic technology and photography — Viewing conditions

Technologie graphique et photographie — Conditions d'examen visuel



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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO 3664 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 42, *Photography*, in collaboration with Technical Committee ISO/TC 130, *Graphic technology*.

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO 3664:2000), which has been technically revised by tightening the compliance tolerances on the ultraviolet portion of the D50 spectral power distribution, by adding additional optional illumination conditions, and by increasing the luminance levels of displays used for image appraisal.

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Introduction

While colour and density measurements play important roles in the control of colour reproduction, they cannot replace the human observer for final assessment of the quality of complex images. Colour reflection artwork, photographic transparencies, photographic prints, and photomechanical reproductions such as on-press and off-press proofs or press sheets, are commonly evaluated for their image and colour quality or compared critically with one another for fidelity of colour matching. Paper and other substrates contribute to the colour appearance, and controlling the colour of these is equally critical. However, it is noted that the paper industry has its own set of standards for unprinted paper, which differ in illumination conditions from those recommended in this International Standard.

There is no doubt that the best viewing condition for the visual assessment of colour is that in which the product will be finally seen. Where this is known and it is practical to do so, the various people in the production chain can sensibly agree to use this viewing condition for all evaluation and comparison. However, it is important that this be properly agreed upon in advance and that it be specified that such a viewing condition is not defined in this International Standard.

Unfortunately, such agreement is often not practical. Even if a particular end-use condition is known, it can be impractical to provide everybody in the production chain with sufficiently consistent viewing apparatus. Differences in illumination and viewing conditions can cause corresponding differences in the colour appearance of substrates, reproductions and artwork. Such differences are likely to cause misunderstandings about colour reproduction and processing. This International Standard provides specifications for illumination and viewing conditions that, when properly implemented, will reduce errors and misunderstandings caused by such deficiencies and inconsistencies.

The illumination used to view colour photographic prints, photomechanical reproductions and transparencies needs to provide adequate amounts of radiant power from all parts of the ultraviolet (UV) and visible spectrum to avoid distorting their appearance from that observed under commonly used sources of illumination, such as daylight. The UV content is important where fluorescent samples, which are excited in this region, are encountered – a phenomenon associated with many of the paper substrates on which images are reproduced, as well as with some of the dyes and pigments themselves.

To ensure consistency with previous editions of this International Standard, as well as with the majority of equipment in current use, the reference spectral power distribution specified in this International Standard is CIE illuminant D50. Many of the reasons for the selection of illuminant D50 in the first edition of this International Standard (ISO 3664:1975), as opposed to any other CIE daylight illuminant, are equally applicable today. In the development of the second edition of this International Standard (ISO 3664:2000), consideration was given to changing the reference illuminant to CIE F8, a 5 000 K illuminant more typical of fluorescent lamps. However, it was felt that this would provide only a minimal conformance advantage (as shown in Annex B), and the actual goal is for the illumination to simulate natural daylight.

Because it is very difficult to produce artificial sources of illumination that closely match the spectral power distribution of daylight, it is important that the tolerances specified within this International Standard provide a compromise between those required for lamp manufacturing purposes and those for consistent viewing. In this International Standard, three constraints apply which define the characteristics of the light falling on the viewing plane – one directly and two indirectly – and all three need to be met simultaneously if a viewing apparatus is to be in compliance.

The chromaticity, which directly defines the colour of the illumination at the viewing surface, is specified as that for illuminant D50, and the tolerance by a circle in the CIE 1976 Uniform Chromaticity Scale (UCS) diagram having a specified radius around that value. To establish the compliance of the spectral power distribution of the illumination to that of illuminant D50, the methods defined in CIE 13.3-1995 and ISO/CIE 23603 are both specified. One defines the colour rendering quality of a lamp and the other defines its ability to correctly predict metamers. Both requirements are important to the graphic technology and photographic industries. The virtual metamers for CIE illuminant D50 from ISO/CIE 23603 are used. In

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addition, based on experimental work described in Annex B, a practical tolerance of acceptability has been defined, alongside a Colour Rendering Index requirement.

The perceived tonal scale and colours of a print or transparency can be significantly influenced by the chromaticity and luminance of other objects and surfaces in the field of view. For this reason, ambient conditions, which will possibly affect the state of visual adaptation, need to be designed to avoid any significant effects on the perception of colour and tone, and immediate surround conditions also need to be specified. Such specifications are provided in this International Standard.

Experience in the industries covered by this International Standard has revealed the need for two levels of illumination:

- a high level for critical evaluation and comparison, and
- a lower level for appraising the tone scale of an individual image under illumination levels similar to those under which it will be finally viewed.

This International Standard specifies these two levels of illumination.

The higher level is essential to graphic technology where comparison is being made, such as between original artwork and proof, or to evaluate small colour differences between proof and press sheet in order to control a printing operation. It is effective in these situations because it enhances the visibility of any differences. The high level of illumination is also appropriate in photography when comparing two or more transparencies or when critically evaluating a single image to assess the darkest tones that can be printed.

Since, despite adaptation, the level of illumination has quite a significant effect on the appearance of an image, the lower level is required in order to appraise the image at a level more similar to that in which it will be finally viewed. Although it is recognized that quite a wide range of illumination levels can be encountered in practical viewing situations, the lower level chosen is considered to be fairly representative of the range encountered. For this reason, it is applicable to aesthetic appraisal, including the conditions for routine inspection of prints.

The viewing of transparencies is specified both for direct viewing and by projection. Additional conditions are also specified for those situations where transparencies are to be compared to a print. The particular surround specified for transparencies recognizes the way that a transparency needs to be viewed for optimum visibility of the dark tones, but acknowledges that practical viewing equipment is likely to have ambient conditions that introduce some viewing flare. The combination of surround and flare produce an appearance that is fairly representative of how the transparency will look in a typically lighted room.

Small transparencies are commonly evaluated in graphic technology by direct viewing. When it is necessary to view transparencies directly, these need to be viewed in accordance with the conditions specified for the particular situation. However, for some purposes, smaller transparencies are not viewed directly because the viewing distance for correct perspective and perception of detail is too small for visual comfort. Furthermore, when small transparencies are reproduced for publication or other purposes, they are usually enlarged. To make comparison easier, it is helpful to enlarge the transparency image when comparing it to the print. For these reasons, a viewing condition can be required that provides a magnified image when viewed at an appropriate distance.

Colour monitors are being used increasingly to display and view digital images in graphic technology and photography. In order to ensure consistency of assessment in this situation, it is important that the viewing conditions in which the monitors are placed be reasonably well specified. However, it is important to note that adherence to these specifications does not ensure that the monitor will match the hardcopy without provision of a defined colour transformation to the displayed image or use of proper colour management. This aspect of matching is outside the scope of this International Standard.

The specifications provided in this International Standard for images viewed on colour monitors are for images viewed independently of any form of hardcopy. Conditions for direct comparisons between hardcopy and softcopy (even where a suitable colour transformation has been applied) are outside the scope of this International Standard, which can be seen as being primarily relevant where successive viewing of hardcopy and softcopy takes place. ISO 12646 provides more detailed recommendations where direct comparison is

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required. When making such comparisons, it is generally desirable to view the colour monitor under the lower levels of ambient illumination specified in this International Standard and with the maximum level of luminance achievable and the hardcopy sample at the lower levels of illumination specified for printed matter in this International Standard (and their equivalent for transparencies). However, this will in turn affect the perceived tone and colourfulness of the hardcopy.

This International Standard meets the current needs of the graphic technology and photographic industries and minimizes differences between viewing equipment. It contains multiple specifications, each of which is appropriate to specific requirements. It is important that users ensure they employ the specification that is appropriate to their application.