



## Monitor Calibration

by Joshua Fischer

### Why should I calibrate my monitor?

This will probably be your most common question and definitely your most important answer. First off, everyone needs monitor calibration. Your customer can own an \$8000 EIZO monitor or a \$100 Dell. All Monitors go in and out of calibration. And when this happens the way your monitor presents colors becomes affected and for a photographer that is simply not acceptable. There is a way to prevent and treat this issue and that is through regular monitor calibration. The best way to answer this question is with another question. Ask your customer "Have you ever had a print come out or back from the lab that simply does NOT look like what you see on your monitor?" 99% of your customers will say of course! And this is where you get to be the hero; there is an answer, monitor calibration.



When you calibrate your monitor you are bringing it back to ICC standards or The International Color Consortium standard. This is this standard to which all printers and monitors are set. That way with regular calibration you know that the color you see on your screen are accurate and what your printer or lab are going to see as well. An example I've heard that might help is color calibrating a monitor is to photographers as tuning an instrument is to musicians. When a photographer calibrates their monitor they not only making sure THEY see the accurate colors, but they are making sure that everyone else who calibrates their monitor is going to see their image the same way. In the same sense when a musician tunes his or her instrument they are making sure that the music they play will sound the same no matter who plays it.

### How often should I calibrate my monitor?

This might be the second most common question you hear. For me it is, but it's usually closely followed by "What's the difference between the Spyder3Pro and the Spyder3 Elite?" Which we will cover in person, over the phone, and through WebEx seminars so I won't bore you with that one. The short answer; once a month, I like to say if you calibrate once a month you'll be happy and if you calibrate twice a month we'll be happy. The average monitor will benefit from calibration once a month, but that doesn't mean that if you perform this maintenance more than once a month you're doing any damage. It just might not be necessary. Monitor calibration takes approximately 5 minutes and those five minutes once a month will be well spent to prevent and possible color issues in the future. I also like to recommend that you suggest to your customers to calibrate before their larger projects. Coming from the photography field I know how important your output can be. I know that it is simply not acceptable to give your customer a wedding album that isn't color managed throughout. That why I also suggest a calibration before larger projects. It's not a necessity, but it always puts the customer at easy knowing that their product will be in a color safe space. It also shows you know some of the hurdles they go through in their day-to-day business.

### What's the difference between the Spyder3Pro and the Spyder3 Elite?

This one has to be one of the more important questions for you to be able to answer. To keep it short and sweet I boil it down to the three most important differences. Technically there are about 12, but here are the go to ones:

### Projector Calibration

The Spyder3Pro has been designed to calibrate LCD, CRT, and Laptop monitors.

The Spyder3Elite has been designed to calibrate LCD, CRT, Laptops, AND Projectors.

### Studio Match or Dual Monitor Calibration

The Spyder3Pro will calibrate one monitor on one system, single monitor calibration.

The Spyder3Elite will calibrate multiple monitors on one system or Studio Match.

### Expert User Console

The Spyder3Pro has our Standard Wizard based walkthrough.

The Spyder3Elite has our Standard Wizard based walkthrough as well as the Expert User Console.

With these three differences you should be able to help the customer decide which product is best suited for them. After I make these differences clear I do like to reassure the customer that these are all software differences, not hardware differences. You are not losing out on quality, speed, or accuracy, but choosing one product over the other. The hardware is functionally identical. So you can feel safe in choosing the product that serves your needs best.

### Is it worth it to upgrade from a Spyder Legacy product to a new Spyder3 product?

Short answer, of course! One of the best and worst hurdles a salesman is going to have to overcome will be; "I already own a Spyder and I'm happy with it". Usually I say then stay happy with it. We have made a number of improvements over our previous models, but if it's not broken, don't fix it. If the customer asks about those improvements then here are a few things that you can talk to them about.

The greatest improvement from our previous line of Spyder monitor calibrators in my opinion would be the software. Datacolor takes every opportunity to update and maintain our software through regular online downloads, but occasionally a complete revamp is necessary. With the latest line the software has been completely redesigned. Creating a much more user-friendly experience. We have simplified the number of steps involved and decreased the amount of time it takes to calibrate while increasing the accuracy of the calibration itself.

The sensor has been completely redesigned with a sleek look and more importantly a 246% larger aperture for reading more available light from the screen.

While making the sensor itself larger we have made the unit smaller and more compact, by over 11 cubic inches with the second most important improvement an ambient light sensor on the front of the unit. This sensor will take an ambient light reading in the users environment and use the information in calculating the proper color correction. If left plugged into a powered USB port it will also take light readings throughout the day to monitor ambient light change and warn the user if recalibration is needed.

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Josh graduated from The New York Film Academy where he majored in cinematography. Since then, he has worked primarily as a professional photographer and videographer as well as a program coordinator maintaining scientific equipment at Merck Pharmaceuticals and Schering-Plough.