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Color LaserWriter 12/600 PS: Quark Xpress Pantone Colors (1/96)

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TOPIC -----

I am using QuarkXPress and printing on the Color LaserWriter 12/600 PS. I am using the Color LaserWriter 12/600 PS Pantone files for QuarkXPress, and the printing result is what I expect (the colors are similar). Problems start to arise when I have the file printed by a printing firm, because the Color LaserWriter 12/600 PS pantone color percentage values are different from the ones normally used in the Pantone specification. Is there a utility or a way to convert the LaserWriter Color 12/600 PS Pantone color values into true pantone values?

DISCUSSION -----

You are correct that the values in the Quark Xpress Pantone files for the Color LaserWriter 12/600 PS are different than those specified by the Pantone specification. The CMYK values provided in the Pantone specification are more or less "starting points" for color matching. Since there are a very large number of variables in color matching (type of paper, lighting condition, different toner/inks, characteristics of various print engines, and so forth), desktop publishing professionals by requirement have to fine tune their printers or color values in order to get the output they desire.

The Pantone CMYK values in the Quark document for the Color LaserWriter 12/600 PS are fine-tuned ONLY for the Color LaserWriter 12/600 PS printer. It appears you are trying to use the Color LaserWriter as a color proofer, which is NOT what the printer was really designed for. There are much more expensive color proofing devices available that are designed specifically for this need.

There are no utilities available for converting the Quark Pantone values to the Pantone specification, nor is there a "formula" for calculating the difference. Pantone most likely measured each individual color and determined what CMYK values on the Color LaserWriter 12/600 PS printer most closely matched their colors.

If you use a Pantone swatch, the colors on the swatch should be very close to those produced by the Color LaserWriter 12/600 PS Printer using the "PANTONE for Color LW 12/600 PS" files. Your final output should be exactly the same as the Pantone swatch. Printers adjust their ink values so that the colors match the Pantone swatch books. Since Pantone swatch colors fade over time, you should use

a recent swatch book for color matching.

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