Here is my **Poor Man's way of color matching** without using a hardware aid. Use this on your computer and printer or if you are over at a friends late at night and have to make some prints. Your goal is to get your prints to match your computer screen right? I will not be so concerned with printer and paper ICM profiles and color space with this quick fix. Trust me it works when you have prints to make and you keep making test print after test print to get an acceptable one. You usually get the printer to match the screen but what about getting the screen to match the printer? If A=B then also B=A. I know there are so many printers with so many choices such as with Epson using Photoenhance 4, Epson natural color, ICM, sRGB in their choices. You may refine these later but to get you in the ballpark try this first.
I have an assumption with this process and that is you have some control over the monitor setting buttons than just basic brightness and contrast, you need to also have separate RGB (Red Green Blue) sliders for this to work. The monitor driver on the computer in control panel may also have RGB adjustments so you can use these. I also assume that your printing program (photoshop and clones) let you make color adjustments.

The key to any of this is take good notes so you don't waste so much time and paper/ink. A reason to take notes is that we are going to change (perhaps drastically) your monitor settings and the other uses of your computer will be affected. The internet may have very weird color but if you took notes then you are able to set these back to original.

Go into the setup menu either on the monitor or the display control panel and write down the original settings such as Brightness = 90, Contrast = 65, R=50, G=70, B=40.

First make a print from my test image of the boy and color chart. It will be on our website or I will email it to you. BTW it has a color profile Adobe 1998. Ignore that last info right now. Your print may be too light or dark or the color is off. Use the same paper and settings on the printer each time but the prints can be small to save paper. First try to get a print that is close to good color but don't try to hard. Make notes what printer setting you used. Try to standardize on printing from the same program each time.

First let me explain the biggest problem judging color from the computer screen to the final print. Ambient light. You are using transmitted light from the screen but reflected light from the print. The color from the computer screen doesn't change from day to night but your lighting conditions viewing the print does. You use some combination of tungsten bulb and fluorescent light at night and you add some daylight at other times. Your eyes will make amazing corrections that you cannot control which will fool you into believing you have the perfect print. So the solution is to standardize on one lighting condition. If you look at your prints day or night by themselves you may be satisfied but day or night hold them up to the computer screen and under one of those lighting conditions the print and screen will not match anymore. You will not always have daylight so I suggest either all tungsten (but have you heard they will no longer be selling regular bulbs soon) or one of the Full Spectrum lights or light bulbs for always viewing prints. Bulbs are $20.00 and lights are over $100.. This lighting has to be in your computer room also because you will be holding the print up to the screen.
All of this info on lighting pertains to color matching with hardware (spyders) also.

Here is the basic info, now go into the buttons on the monitor and make the screen match the print. Some of you will be lucky and the print will be close, some will be way off. First adjust the brightness and contrast so you match the grey boxes. Remember you are not trying to get the monitor to look good, you are trying to match the print. Then adjust the Red Green Blue sliders. Here is where it works. Now go into your photo printing program and make the photo look good. ALWAYS work on a copy of the image. Do a **save as** with a different name and then load that image to correct.

When you print the image this time it will be very close to matching your screen. If it looks good on the screen then the print will match. I know this is a long process to get here but it is lots easier the second time you set up a screen like this.

Remember the notes you took? You should have some screen settings written down such as Brightness = 90, Contrast = 65, R=50, G=70, B=40. You can use these to set the screen back to the original settings if you mess things up and want to forget that you ever tried this in the first place.

Let me know what you think,

John Robinson