A GUIDE TO COLOR SYMBOLISM

JILL MORTON

For Kecia and Zachary

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Note: Click on the "Bookmarks" tab at the upper left area of the window that displays this publication or use the menu bar and select Window > Bookmarks. This will open the bookmarks (a hyperlinked "Table of Contents"). Click on any bookmark to link directly to the page.

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ABOUT THIS PDF

How to Use Adobe Reader (Acrobat)

Computer Colors

About Printing

How to use Adobe Reader

Welcome to this electronic publication!

Adobe Reader, formerly known as Acrobat, gives you exceptional control in accessing the information in this book. The following tips are provided to assist you.

Viewing Options
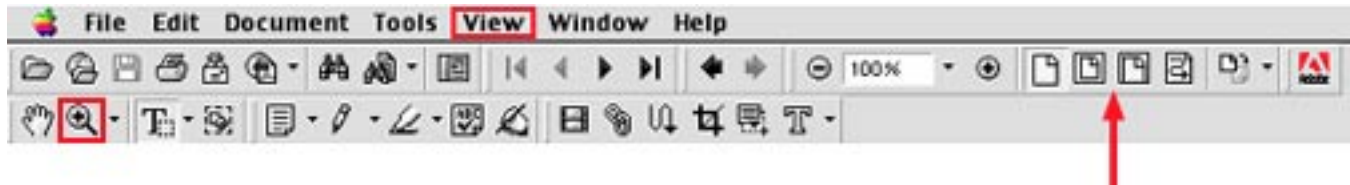
Control the viewing size of the pages in this publication by selecting any one of the options under **View** on the menu bar or any of the page buttons on the command bar. Options include full magnification, fit the page in window, fit the visible width of the page in window, and other selections.

 The zoom-in (magnifying glass) button on the command bar can be used to zoom in and out of any area on a page.

Navigation and Bookmarks

1. Click on the "Bookmarks" tab at the upper left area of the window that displays this publication. It will open the bookmarks (the hyperlinked Table of Contents). Click on any item to link directly to the page.

2. Use the pointer buttons and arrows on the command bar (or at the bottom of the page) to view the next page or the previous page. You can also go to the first or last page. The menu bar can also be used for navigation. Choose **View**>Go to> Next Page or any of the options listed. Acrobat 5.0 choose **Document** > Next Page

3. Small red pointers ▶ are added to some pages. Click and link to the specified page.

How to Find Things

1. Click the find tool (binoculars) on the command bar, or choose **Edit** > Search (or Find) on the menu bar. A dialog box will appear. Enter the text (such as "happy") and click "Find." When the program finds the text, the page containing the text is displayed with the text highlighted.

2. To find more occurrences of the text, select "Find Again" in the same dialog box.

Computer Colors

This publication was designed for electronic distribution and computer viewing. The layout, fonts and colors were chosen for this environment. Every effort has been made to reproduce colors accurately. All illustrations were prepared on a system with full gamma correction and color synchronization.

Note!
Colors may vary on different computer systems.
Anti-glare screens will cause color distortions.
16 - 24 bit color, a high quality monitor and fully corrected gamma deliver the best results.

Windows PCs do not have built-in color correction and typically require a video or graphic card for accurate color readings and full gamma correction.

Color Printing

This publication was designed for on screen viewing using the RGB color model. Printers use the CMYK (cyan, magenta, yellow, black) color model. Therefore, colors on your computer monitor will appear different when printed with CMYK inks. Warning: Printing this publication will consume a large quantity of ink!

Other Printing Issues

Printing PDFs is an easy task on inkjet and all true postscript laser printers. However, some laser printers "emulate postscript" and may need a firmware or software upgrade from the vendor. Although this is not a common problem, these printers may not support the CID font format of PDFs.

INTRODUCTION

About Color Voodoo

About the Color Illustrations

Color Models

Design Applications

Web Site Design Applications

Tips for Color Communication
Global Design & Web Sites

About Color Voodoo

Like voodoo, color can sway thinking, change actions, and cause reactions.

Red means "stop" and green means "go." Traffic lights send this universal message. Likewise, the colors used for a logo, business card, product, packaging, web site, interior design, architectural elements, or clothing cause powerful reactions. Color sends a subliminal message, one which plays a critical role in success or failure. It will either attract or distract, work for you or against you.

The subliminal power of color is serious business. Consequently, the information in this book is presented in a methodical way. You might think the tone is a bit academic, but it will deliver clear concepts about color symbolism so that you can use it to your advantage.

About the Color Illustrations

The color swatches in this publication are based on the 216 colors which are common to both Windows and Macintosh computers and can be viewed on 8 bit (256 colors) monitors. Although all computers are able to generate these colors, the actual colors may vary on different computers. A high quality monitor and fully corrected gamma deliver the best results.

For more information, see "Computer Colors." ▶

Color Models

Monitors and printers reproduce colors differently. Monitors use the red, green, blue (RGB) color model. Printing is based on the cyan, magenta, yellow, and black (CMYK) color model.

Therefore, the colors seen on monitor screens may look different when printed.

Design Applications

The color information and illustrations in this publication will assist in developing a successful color scheme for all areas of design. Since these illustrations and color formulas are based on the RGB color model, variables may occur when using other color systems. The following provides important information about these variables:

Labels, Packaging, Business Cards, Stationery and Signage
The RGB values of the colors may be used as a reference for appropriate specifications for printing and other media.

Broadcast
The RGB values are suitable for broadcast.

Products
The RGB values may be used as a reference for enamels, glazes, paint, textile dyes, and other color media.

Wardrobe
The color swatches may be used as a reference for wardrobe selections.

Interior Design and Architecture

The color swatches may be used as a departure point for interior or exterior color schemes. Caution should be used in paint and wall covering selections. The colors of the swatches in this publication will be quite different when applied to large interior or exterior surfaces. Muted colors will wind up looking much more colorful. Some colors may turn out too pale, others, too dark. Consult with a paint representative and/or a design professional. Large brush-outs will give you a better idea of end results. Similar caution should be used when selecting carpeting and other elements which cover large areas.

Web Site Design Applications

The color information and illustrations in this publication are specifically applicable to web site design. All web site graphics (gifs and jpegs), background colors, text and link colors are based on the RGB color system. Since this is an electronic publication, the same RGB color system was used for all color illustrations. What you see in this publication is an accurate representation of web site colors, one which will help you develop successful colors for web site design.

The HEX code is included for each color swatch. This may be used to specify background colors, text, or link colors in html documents. The RGB values are also supplied and may be used for non-dithering colors for graphic illustrations.

Since these illustrations and color formulas are based on the RGB color system, variables may occur when using other color systems. If you print this publication, the colors may deviate from their on screen accuracy.

Tips for Color Communication - Global Design & Web Sites

1. Know your target market.

As a case study, let's assume you're selecting colors for a bank. Financial institutions require colors which support a sense of security, trust and reliability. The color of currency also comes into play. A risky color would be purple since many of its primary associations are related to the intangible world of creativity, spirituality, mystery and the sub-conscious. Nevertheless, if that financial institution is located in Charlotte North Carolina, the home town of the famed Charlotte Hornets basketball team, whose colors happen to be purple and teal, and if the membership of that bank is primarily female, purple combined with another color is worthy of consideration.

As a general rule of thumb, you have a lot more flexibility in color selections for a regional business. If, on the other hand, the business intends to expand its base nationally or globally, off-beat color selections should be avoided.

2. Use extreme caution with global audiences.

When designing for a global market, designers must subject their color selections to stringent cross-examination. If a color's symbolism is insensitive to a specific culture, that color may communicate in surprising ways.

Consider again the color purple. It may work as a symbol of creativity for art and as a symbol of the extra-terrestrial for science fiction, but it's a polarizing color. People either love it or hate it. Furthermore, it's potentially hazardous on a global level. It may symbolize mourning and death in many cultures in the same way that black does in American culture.

A significant example of purple failure is the initial design of EuroDisney's signs. The color palette was intended to rival Coca Cola's red, but the final selection of vast amounts of purple was a tragic mistake. Purple symbolizes death and the crucifixion in Catholic Europe. It's not surprising that visitors thought the signs were morbid. How did this happen? The CEO liked purple. [1] Personal preference and "avant-garde" tactics frequently cause color disasters. When the wrong color is used on a web site, the damage extends to a global audience.
(Euroclash, ID Magazine, January 1992, p.61)

3. Use caution with "in" colors.

Just because a certain color is a color marketer's "in" color for the year (or next year, or the decade) doesn't mean it will work for everything and it certainly doesn't mean that it will work globally. The late 20th century bore witness to the popularity of yellow-green which ranged in hue from a soft avocado-green to an acidic lime-green. It infiltrated fashion and home furnishings in American culture. Print advertising, television and web sites embraced it for a "cutting edge" look. The more acid the hue, the more it became an "in your face" symbol of the avant-garde.

In spite of this, most shades of yellow-green do not enhance the image of baked goods, toothpaste, cosmetics or gastro-intestinal products. Consequently, this color would only add negative or confusing associations.

4. Don't use personal preference.

The most common color mistake is selecting a color because you like it. Some people will argue that they feel very comfortable with a certain color or that they like the way it looks in a certain context. One designer fell in love with the aqua and yellow color combination of Bahama's license plates. He proceeded to use these colors as the core color scheme on a web site for a paper manufacturer located in Maine. Not by any stretch of the imagination do these colors support this product. They serve only to confuse the viewer, thus discouraging exploration of the web site. Surround yourself with your favorite colors but remember, color communication is a science. Objectively analyze the product or theme of your project. (Advise your client to do the same!)

5. When in doubt, don't.

Most people have an intuitive warning system. If you're feeling a little queasy about a color selection, chances are it's wrong. Test it out by selecting a color one step removed such as a blue-green instead of a blue. You may be close to your mark or way off!

6. When in doubt, stick to timeless symbolism.

The timeless psychological associations and natural references of any given color should be foremost. For example, red is the color of fire and blood. Psychologically it is a dynamic energizing color. It is far removed from any symbolic association of serenity or dependability.
(Refer to the text descriptions in this publication.)

7. Prepare for color mutations on the web.

Think about the last time you were in an electronics store and viewed dozens of television sets in a row. The picture was darker on some sets, the contrast varied, and - on closer examination - you may have noticed that flesh tones and even the colors of the trees and sky were different. The possibility for color mutations is even greater in web site design.

Here's what you can do:

a. Make sure your computer has good color vision.
Start by establishing the best color standard in your computer's operating system. If you're designing on a PC (Windows), correct your gamma by buying the best components and components that work well together. If you're designing on a Macintosh, sufficient gamma correction is built into the operating system. Beware of anti-glare screen devices on all systems.

b. Use the web-safe 216 color palette for a conservative approach

Although most new computer systems can represent thousands or millions of colors, older systems may be limited to 256 colors. Of these 256 colors, 216 are common to both PCs and Macintosh computers. Using a web-safe (216 colors) palette will ensure that the colors you select are standard on all computers and all browsers. Furthermore, colors that exist outside of this basic palette may appear speckled - rather than solid - on older computer systems. This effect is called "dithering" and can cause severe problems in background colors, text, and link colors.

Note: This palette does not mean that the color you select will look exactly the same on all computers. Colors are generated by the computer's operating system and monitor, not the palette. Nevertheless, the 216 web-safe colors are a very reliable standard.

c. Foresee the variables on other computers.

Preview your work on several different computers. If you're on a Mac, check out your designs on a Windows PC with 256 colors (8 bit). You may be surprised by the relative darkness of your hues as well as non-linear color shifts. Teal greens may appear much bluer, sandy beiges may shift into peachy tans. If you're on a PC, chances are you'll be amazed at how much lighter colors are on a Mac. Other color shifts may also be evident.

COLOR SYMBOLISM

Introduction to Color Symbolism
Explanation of Color Symbolism Categories

The Symbolism of Red

The Symbolism of Purple

The Symbolism of Blue

The Symbolism of Green

The Symbolism of Yellow

The Symbolism of Orange

The Symbolism of Brown

The Symbolism of Black

The Symbolism of White

The Symbolism of Gray

Idioms in American English

Introduction to Color Symbolism

In an effort to deliver the most concise information possible, the information about color symbolism in this publication is based primarily on global generalizations about color meanings. As such, it may be considered to be a "transcultural" approach. On the other hand, there are countless examples of how a color such as green may mean different things in different cultures or countries. For example, green is a sacred color in Islamic cultures, while in the United States, green represents good luck and currency.

Timeless Cross-Cultural Symbolism?

Nature provides a starting point for universal color symbolism. Natural references, such as fire and water, play a powerful role in the symbolic meaning of the respective colors in all cultures. This symbolism can be considered timeless and cross-cultural. Other symbolic meanings may change over time and are considered timely. These are linked to politics, fashion, religion, myths, gender and age.

In conclusion, it's important to note that global color symbolism is in constant flux. On one hand, we see a melding of diverse cultures; in direct contrast, we see people embracing their cultural heritage with a new intensity.

Editor's Note: Another eBook by this author - "Global Color: Clues and Taboos" - addresses the topic of global symbolism in great detail. Please refer to the last page of this publication.

Explanation of Color Symbolism Categories

The first category - "**References in Nature**" - includes natural elements that a person would find at any time on Earth.

The second category - "**Psychological Symbolism**" - includes positive and negative associations.

Other symbolic categories that may be significant include:

- "Contemporary Culture" lists objects and associations that have evolved in the 20th and 21st Century. (Note: This category may apply to some, but not all colors.)
- "Religious," "Historical / Political," and "Other Cultures," and "Fashion." These categories are included only when they are relevant to a color.
- "OSHA Coding" includes the symbolism of colors per OSHA (Occupational Safety and Hazard Administration) standards. Although this an American standard for industry, there are significant similarities to psychological and natural associations. (Note: This category may apply to some, but not all colors.)
- "Optics" covers specific scientific information about the visual effects of the color as a result of the mechanisms within the human eye. (Note: This category may apply to some, but not all colors.)
- A list of idiomatic expressions in American English is also included as a final reflection on symbolism.

THE SYMBOLISM OF RED

Psychological Symbolism

energy
warmth
strength
impulse
dynamism
activity
courage
excitement
love
passion
dominance
rebellion
aggression
war and combat
violence
sexuality
prostitution

References in Nature

fire
blood
raw meat, flesh
roses, carnations, and other flowers
apples, berries, tomatoes, and other fruits
cardinals and other birds
rubies and other gemstones

Contemporary Culture

traffic lights and signs designating "Stop"
fire engines in many countries
associated with the planet Mars
hearts (Valentines Day)
Christmas

Religion

the devil

Historical / Political Associations

associated with communism in the 20th century

Other Cultures
an important color in China and Japan

Fashion
attention getting, sexy

OSHA Coding
Red: danger, stopping, fire protection equipment

Optics
Red advances, thereby creating the impression that red
  objects are closer than they are.

Etc.
Reds are classified as yellow-based or blue-based.
Yellow-based reds, such as tomato, appeal to males.
Blue-based reds, such as raspberry, appeal to females.

Swatches ▶

THE SYMBOLISM OF PURPLE

Psychological Symbolism

spirituality
mysticism
magic
faith
the unconscious
dignity
mystery
creativity
awareness
inspiration
passion
imagination
sensitivity
aristocracy and royalty
conceit
pomposity
cruelty
mourning
death

References in Nature

orchids, irises
grapes, plums
cabbage
purpura shellfish (from the Mediterranean)
(Note: purple very rarely occurs in nature)

Contemporary Culture

Purple Heart
  (American military award for bravery)

Historical/Political Associations

the imperial color of ancient Rome

Fashion

associated with mourning in some Western and
    Eastern cultures

OSHA Coding

Purple: hazardous nuclear energy

Optics/Physiology

the hardest color for the eye to discriminate

Swatches ▶

THE SYMBOLISM OF BLUE

Psychological Symbolism

spirituality
trust
truth
cleanliness
tranquility
contentment
immateriality
passivity
understanding
conservatism
security
technology
masculinity
coolness and cold
introversion
melancholy
depression

References in Nature

sky
oceans and lakes
blueberries
bluebirds
fish
mold
blue bonnets and other flowers
lapis and other gemstones
Note: blue is not commonly found in natural objects

Contemporary Culture

denim (blue jeans)
Police uniforms (U.S.)
IBM - Big Blue

Historical/Political Associations

the color of robes representing the station of phi-
  losopher in ancient Rome
signifies spiritual and pacific virtue in Christian art

Other Cultures

the color of immortality in China
the color of holiness for Hebrews
the color of the god Krishna in Hinduism

OSHA Coding

Blue: cautions against the starting, use, or
  movement of equipment under repair

Optics/Physiology

Blue recedes, thereby creating the impression that
  blue objects are farther away than they are.

Swatches ▶

THE SYMBOLISM OF GREEN

Psychological Symbolism

nature
growth
fruitfulness
renewal
freshness
tranquility
hope
youth
health
peace
good luck
coolness
envy
immaturity

References in Nature

all vegetation
lakes and other inland waters
emeralds, jade, and other gemstones
birds
fish

Contemporary Culture

ecology and conservation
traffic lights designating "Go"
American money (greenbacks)
Christmas

Historical/Political/Religious Associations

the color of Islam
Celtic myths: the Green man was the God of fertility

Fashion

favored by sophisticated Europeans for a long time
avocado greens: popular in the '60's in the US
stable pure shades of green: the color of the '90's

OSHA Coding

Green: used for designating safety and locations of first
   aid equipment

Optics/Physiology

Green is said to be the most restful color to the eye
   (the lens of the eye focuses green light exactly on
   the retina.
The range of green hues is very broad.

Swatches ▶

THE SYMBOLISM OF YELLOW

Psychological Symbolism

cheer
hope
vitality
luminosity
enlightenment (mental and spiritual)
communication
expansion
optimism
philosophy
egoism
dishonesty
betrayal
cowardice

References in Nature

sunlight
sand
autumn leaves
corn, squash, and other vegetables
lemons, bananas, and other fruits
sunflowers, daffodils, and other flowers
canaries and other birds
fish
gold, topaz and other gemstones
human hair and animal fur
urine, phlegm, pus, jaundiced skin

Contemporary Culture

traffic lights and signs designating slow or caution
taxis (Yellow Cab-U.S.)
quarantine flags
butter, mustard and spices

Religion

Deities in Greek mythology had yellow hair
and robes. (Therefore, it was not popular
with the early Christians.)

Historical/Political Associations

Yellow Fever

Other Cultures

a symbol of the emperor in China
a sacred color in Hinduism
the color preferred by Confucius
an important color in Early Egypt

OSHA Coding

Yellow: cautions against physical hazards,
such as projections

Optics

Yellow is the color the eye processes first.
It is the most visible and luminous color of the
spectrum

Swatches ▶

THE SYMBOLISM OF ORANGE

Psychological Symbolism

energy
cheer
activity
excitement
warmth
crassness

OSHA Coding

Orange: designates dangerous parts of
    machines or   energized equipment which
    may cause injury

References in Nature

fire
sunset
oranges, mangoes, apricots, and other fruits
pumpkins, yams, and other vegetables
flowers and autumn leaves
goldfish
human hair and animal fur

Contemporary Culture

life rafts
copper
symbolizes that a product is inexpensive (U.S.)
Halloween (U.S.)
school buses (U.S.)

Historical / Political Associations

The Royal House of the Netherlands is referred
    to as the House of Orange

Swatches ▶

THE SYMBOLISM OF BROWN

Psychological Symbolism

nature
durability
reliability
realism
warmth
comfort
homeyness
boredom

Contemporary Culture

chocolate
coffee, cola and other beverages
rice, grains
sugar
tobacco
UPS trucks

References in Nature

earth
tree trunks
roots
rocks
autumn leaves
cooked meat
human hair and skin
animal fur
birds
fecal matter

Etc.

Note: Although browns are very muted versions of oranges and reds, the swatches are grouped independent of the parent colors. In some cases, the dividing line between a muted orange and a brown is not rigid.

Swatches ▶

THE SYMBOLISM OF BLACK

Psychological Symbolism

power
sophistication
sexuality
the unknown
the end of a cycle
   (after the fire, after the day, comes the dark)
death
corruption
ominous forces
emptiness
depression

References in Nature

the darkness of night, absence of light
rocks
hardened lava
charred wood and other objects
soot
crows and other birds
the pupil of the eye
human hair and animal fur
onyx, slate and other minerals

Contemporary Culture

ink
cast iron and other metals
industrial machinery

Religion

the color of the Christian priesthood, representing self-denial
evil forces

Historical/Political Associations

the Black Plague
Black Panthers (U.S. Militant Organization)

Fashion

power color
the color of mourning in many Western cultures

Etc.

In subtractive color theory, black is the result of the combi-
nation of all colors.

Swatches ▶

THE SYMBOLISM OF WHITE

Psychological Symbolism

purity
cleanliness
truth
innocence
chastity
spirituality
sophistication
refinement
newness
blandness
sterility
death

References in Nature

the non-color of light
clouds
snow
sea foam
flowers
doves and other birds
opals
teeth, hair, whites of the eyes
animal fur
cooked meat (chicken) and fish

Contemporary Culture

the white dove of peace
the "White House"
    (presidential residence in U.S.)
processed food
    (white bread, rice, sugar, etc.)
detergents

Religion

salvation
the holiness of the God figure
the purity of the priesthood

Historical/Political Associations

the color of the flag of surrender
the color of mourning in ancient Rome and
    medieval France

Fashion

wedding gowns symbolizing chastity
the color of mourning in some Western and
    many Eastern cultures
uniforms for doctors and nurses

Optics/Physiology

Pure white can produce glare and cause
    optical fatigue when used in large
    quantities.

Etc.

In additive color theory, white is the result of
    the combination of all colors of the spec-
    trum.

THE SYMBOLISM OF GRAY

Psychological Symbolism

neutrality
intelligence
futurism
modesty
technology
secure
liberalism
tranquility
cold
retirement
indifference
sadness
decay
dreariness

References in Nature

rocks
smoke
clouds (stormy or overcast skies)
shadows
human hair

Contemporary Culture

concrete
silver, platinum, steel and other metals
industrial machinery

Optics/Physiology

the simplest color for eye to see

Swatches ▶

IDIOMS IN AMERICAN ENGLISH

Although idiomatic expressions are representative of the culture from which they arise, they demonstrate significant associations, many of which reinforce the general psychological symbolism of specific colors. The following represents a sampling of idioms in American English.

Red
red-blooded (hearty, healthy)
red-neck (low class, uneducated)
red light district (prostitution)
to be caught red-handed (with evidence)
to be in the red (in debt)
red tape (a mire of details)
red ticket item (a special item)
a red letter day (a fantastic day)

Green
green thumb (good gardening abilities)
green with envy
green around the gills (sick)
green behind the ears (immature)
green alien beings

Blue
blue chip stocks (solid, profitable)
singing the blues (songs with melancholy lyrics)
feeling blue (sad, depressed)
blue laws (puritanical conduct laws)
blue collar worker (laborer)
blue ribbon (the highest award)
blue blood (aristocratic)
blue streak (fast movement)
blue lightning (fast movement)
blue book (a publication listing car prices)
out of the blue (unexpected)

Purple
to turn purple with rage

Yellow

yellow press (unscrupulous, sensational journalism)
to be yellow (cowardly)
to have a yellow streak (cowardly)
yellow-bellied (derogatory, cowardly)

White

white magic (good, kind)
white lies (falsehoods for a higher purpose)
white collar worker (professional, upper class)
to white wash (cover up)

Brown

to brown bag (to bring your lunch)
brownie points (credit gained by flattering someone)
to brown nose (to flatter someone for personal gain)

Gray

gray areas (shadowy areas or concepts that lack specificity)
seeing things in shades of gray (with an open-mind)
gray matter (the brain)

Black

black magic (evil)
to be in the black (making a profit)
black sheep (a member of a family or group who is a disgrace)
little black book (an address book listing special people)
black ball (cast a negative vote against someone)
black list (a list of persons who are disapproved of and are to be punished)
black market (illicit trade in goods)

COLOR SWATCHES

Color Codes and Formulas
About the layout of the swatches
About the terms used

Red Swatches

Purple Swatches

Blue Swatches

Blue-Green Swatches

Green Swatches

Yellow Swatches

Orange Swatches

Brown Swatches

Black & White Swatches

Gray Swatches

Color Codes and Formulas

The color swatches in this publication were selected from a set of colors which are common to both PC and Macintosh computers. The RGB formulas and the HEX code (for web site HTML specifications) are on the left side of each color swatch.

R: 000
G: 255
B: 204
←———— The RGB (Red, Green, Blue) formula

00FFCC ←———— The HEX code for web site design

About the layout of the swatches

The colors in this publication are divided into the following groups: red, purple, blue, green, yellow, orange, brown, black, white and gray. In some cases, the dividing line between the color groups is quite fluid and can not be considered an absolute. The primary focus is on the symbolic descriptions of each color rather than a rigid positioning.

The colors are arranged in chromatic order. For example, the group of greens begins with "teal green" (a green with a slight blue cast), progresses to pure green, and ends with olive green (a green with a yellow cast).

Similar versions of the same color are grouped sequentially. These groupings may include a light version, a medium version, a dark version, a bright version and a muted version of the same "parent" color.

About the terms used

The English language does not support a wide range of color terms beyond the names of basic hues, such as "red" and "blue." In addition to the basic color names, colors may also be described by references to naturally occurring objects, such as "burgundy" or "lime". Designer color terms such as "Antique White" and "Riviera Blue" are not accurate and are not used in this publication.

In order to differentiate each color, the following descriptive terms are used:
Dark - a dark version of the color, one that is a "shade" of the original color
Medium - a medium or medium-light version of the color
Light - a light version of the color, one which is a pastel or "tint " of the original color
Muted - a dull, less colorful version of the color
Bright - a very pure, very intense, very saturated version of the color
Deep - a very rich version of the color, a full bodied color in spite of its relative darkness

Some colors may also be described with terms such as "yellow-based" or "blue-based." For example, a tomato red is a "yellow-based" red. In other words, tomato red is a red with a slight yellow-orange cast to it. Raspberry red is a "blue-based" red, one with a slight blue cast to it. These distinctions affect the gender-based appeal of red. In other colors, they serve to differentiate one from another.

Since the emphasis is on constructive applications of colors, positive descriptions are used for the symbolism of each individual color. Refer back to the symbolic analysis of each color for possible negative associations.

Red Swatches 1-4

R: 153
G: 000
B: 000
990000

Dark Brick Red (yellow-based red)
earthy, friendly, robust, strong, tasty, warm

R: 204
G: 000
B: 000
CC0000

Medium Dark Red (yellow-based red)
invigorating, powerful, zesty, tasty, spicy, hot

R: 255
G: 000
B: 000
FF0000

Tomato Red (yellow-based red)
dynamic, powerful, aggressive, rebellious, impulsive, strong, sexy, exciting, festive, good luck, fast, war-like, demonic, hot

R: 255
G: 102
B: 102
FF6666

Salmon Red (yellow-based red)
healthy, happy, tasty, friendly, cosmetic, warm

Red Swatches 5-8

Name & Symbolism

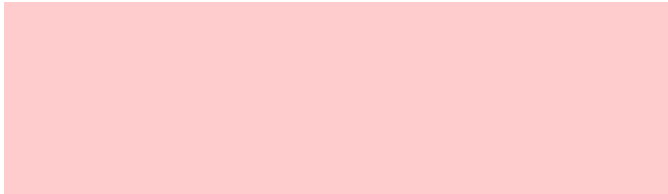| RGB / Hex		Name & Symbolism
R: 204 G: 102 B: 102 CC6666		**Muted Brick Red (yellow-based red)** healthy, tasty, comforting, warm
R: 204 G: 153 B: 153 CC9999		**Mauve Beige** sophisticated, relaxing, cosmetic, warm
R: 255 G: 204 B: 204 FFCCCC		**Light Warm Pink (yellow-based red)** comforting, gentle, delicate, sweet, happy, floral, spring-like, babyish, feminine
R: 255 G: 000 B: 051 FF0033		**Bright Cherry Red** festive, dynamic, energizing, sexy, fruity, warm

RGB / Hex	Swatch	Name & Symbolism
R: 153 G: 000 B: 051 990033		**Dark Red (blue-based red)** formal, majestic, sophisticated, elegant, rich, warm
R: 255 G: 102 B: 153 FF6699		**Deep Pink (blue-based red)** healthy, happy, fun, floral, sweet, fruity, warm
R: 204 G: 000 B: 102 CC0066		**Raspberry Red (blue-based red)** vibrant, fruity, feminine, warm
R: 255 G: 000 B: 153 FF0099		**Bright Raspberry Pink** **(blue-based red)** zany, electric, festive, vibrant, ecstatic, tangy-fruity, whimsical, tropical, hot

RGB Hex	Red Swatches 13-16	Name & Symbolism
R: 255 G: 153 B: 204 FF99CC		**Raspberry Pink (blue-based red)** happy, fun, comforting, sweet, child-like, feminine, cosmetic, spring-like, floral, warm
R: 102 G: 000 B: 051 660033		**Deep Burgundy Red (blue-based red)** sophisticated, aristocratic, majestic, dignified, elegant, high quality, expensive
R: 204 G: 051 B: 153 CC6699		**Light Muted Burgundy Red (blue-based red)** romantic, intimate, floral, tender, feminine, cosmetic, sentimental
R: 153 G: 000 B: 102 990066		**Deep Plum Red (blue-based red)** elegant, majestic, spiritual, fruity, feminine

Red Swatches 17-19
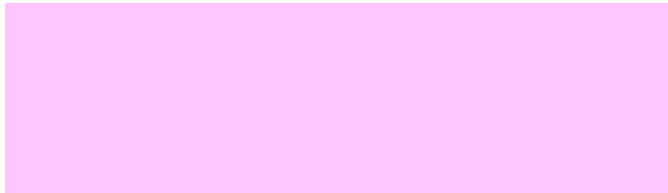
Name & Symbolism

R: 255
G: 102
B: 204
FF66CC

Light Hot Pink (blue-based red)
happy, fun, festive, tropical, feminine, cosmetic, floral, warm

R: 255
G: 000
B: 255
FF00FF

**Fuchsia/ Bright Magenta
(blue-based red)**
zany, electric, festive, magical, whimsical, exotic, tropical, hot

R: 255
G: 204
B: 255
FFCCFF

Light Pink (blue-based red)
happy, delicate, floral, cosmetic, feminine, child-like, floral

The Symbolism of Red ▶
(Text)

RGB Hex	Purple Swatches 1-4	Name & Symbolism

R: 102
G: 000
B: 102
660066

Burgundy Purple
sophisticated, aristocratic, majestic, elegant, expensive, dignified, spiritual, fruity

R: 153
G: 000
B: 153
990099

Medium Burgundy Purple
vibrant, spiritual, passionate, floral, fruity

R: 204
G: 102
B: 204
CC66CC

Medium Light Burgundy Purple
romantic, cosmetic, floral, warm

R: 204
G: 153
B: 204
CC99CC

Light Red Purple
spiritual, delicate, romantic, spring-like, floral

RGB / Hex	Swatch	Name & Symbolism
R: 102 G: 051 B: 102 663366		**Dark Mauve Purple** sophisticated, elegant, philosophical, spiritual, artistic
R: 051 G: 000 B: 102 330066		**Dark Purple #1** regal, dignified, elegant, expensive, philosophical, intelligent, spiritual, mysterious
R: 102 G: 000 B: 153 660099		**Grape Purple** sophisticated, aristocratic, expensive, elegant, dignified, philosophical, creative, passionate, mysterious, spiritual, fruity
R: 204 G: 153 B: 255 CC99FF		**Light Grape Purple** spiritual, romantic, spring-like, floral

Purple Swatches 9-12

Name & Symbolism

RGB / Hex		Name & Symbolism
R: 153 G: 000 B: 255 9900FF		**Bright Purple** electric, potent, aware, passionate, vibrant, spiritual, mystical, magical, tropical, tangy, floral
R: 153 G: 102 B: 255 9966FF		**Medium Purple** spiritual, sensitive, romantic, spring-like, floral
R: 102 G: 000 B: 255 6600FF		**Ultraviolet Purple** powerful, intense, intelligent, creative, aware, vibrant, high tech, electric, radioactive
R: 153 G: 153 B: 255 9999FF		**Medium Light Ultraviolet Purple** spiritual, meditative, tranquil

Purple Swatches 13-16

Name & Symbolism

RGB / Hex		Name & Symbolism
R: 051 **G: 000** **B: 153** **330099**		**Dark Purple #2** regal, dignified, elegant, expensive, philosophical, intelligent, spiritual, mysterious
R: 204 **G: 204** **B: 255** **CCCCFF**		**Light Purple** spiritual, meditative, calming, soothing
R: 102 **G: 102** **B: 153** **666699**		**Medium Gray Purple** dignified, intellectual, respectable, expensive, sophisticated, creative
R: 153 **G: 153** **B: 204** **9999CC**		**Light Gray Purple** philosophical, creative, sophisticated, spiritual, peaceful

Purple Swatches 17-18

Name & Symbolism

R: 051
G: 000
B: 204
3300CC

Blue Purple
dignified, high tech, potent, electric, intelligent

R: 102
G: 102
B: 255
6666FF

Medium Blue Purple
inspirational, spiritual, mystical, sensitive

The Symbolism of Purple ▶
(Text)

RGB / Hex		Name & Symbolism
R: 000 G: 000 B: 102 000066		**Dark Navy Blue** dignified, trustworthy, professional, official, intelligent, respectable, secure, sophisticated, expensive, nautical
R: 051 G: 000 B: 255 3300FF		**Cobalt Blue (purple-based)** high tech, powerful, electric, strong, sporty, cool
R: 000 G: 000 B: 153 000099		**Navy Blue** dignified, trustworthy, professional, official, intelligent, respectable, secure, sophisticated, expensive, nautical, masculine
R: 000 G: 000 B: 255 0000FF		**Bright Blue** strong, knowledgeable, clean, high tech, sporty, marine, masculine, cool

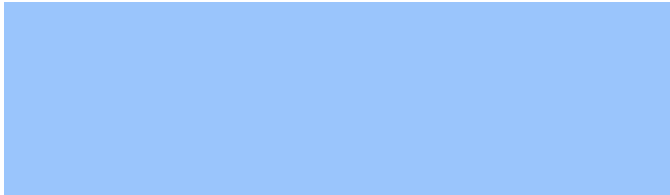| RGB / Hex	Name & Symbolism
R: 000 G: 051 B: 204 0033CC	**Blue** dependable, understanding, secure, calming, masculine, cool
R: 102 G: 153 B: 255 6699FF	**Medium Light Muted Blue** calming, soothing, understanding, ethereal, spiritual, melancholic, marine, light, cold
R: 051 G: 102 B: 204 3366CC	**Medium Muted Blue** secure, trustworthy, understanding, calming, cool
R: 153 G: 204 B: 255 99CCFF	**Light Blue** peaceful, calming, quiet, passive, ethereal, spiritual, cool

RGB Hex	Blue Swatches 9-12	Name & Symbolism

R: 000
G: 102
B: 255
0066FF

Medium Blue
clean, refreshing, marine, aquatic, cool

R: 000
G: 153
B: 255
0099FF

Cerulean Blue
clean, refreshing, aquatic, cool

R: 051
G: 102
B: 153
336699

Medium Blue Gray
dignified, dependable, professional, respectable, intelligent, peaceful

R: 102
G: 153
B: 204
6699CC

Light Blue Gray
peaceful, intelligent, understanding, spiritual, wintery

R: 000
G: 102
B: 153
006699

Dark Turquoise Blue
relaxing, dependable, aquatic, cool

R: 000
G: 204
B: 255
00CCFF

Aqua
refreshing, clean, aquatic, cool

The Symbolism of Blue ▶
(Text)

R: 000
G: 255
B: 255
00FFFF

Cyan
festive, whimsical, zesty, refreshing, aquatic, clean, tropical, cool

R: 204
G: 255
B: 255
CCFFFF

Light Cyan
peaceful, soothing, clean, cool

RGB Hex	Green Swatches 1-4	Name & Symbolism

R: 000
G: 102
B: 102
006666

Teal Green
dependable, comfortable, secure, natural, dignified, sophisticated, professional

R: 000
G: 153
B: 153
009999

Medium Teal Green
healthy, relaxing, soothing, refreshing, aquatic, cool

R: 051
G: 102
B: 102
336666

Dark Gray Green
dignified, sophisticated, dependable, secure, professional, peaceful

R: 153
G: 204
B: 204
99CCCC

Light Gray Green (celadon)
peaceful, soothing, sophisticated, subdued, cool

R: 000
G: 255
B: 204
00FFCC

Cyan Green
refreshing, stimulating, electric, astringent, whimsical, clean, aquatic, cool

R: 000
G: 204
B: 153
00CC99
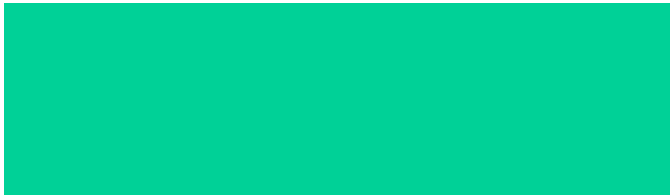
Viridian Green (blue-based)
healthy, refreshing, relaxing, aquatic, cool

R: 000
G: 255
B: 153
00FF99

Bright Green
healthy, zesty, botanical, fresh, clean, cleansing, electric, minty, cool

R: 153
G: 255
B: 204
99FFCC

Light Green
refreshing, soothing, minty, cool

R: 000 G: 051 B: 051 003333		**Dark Green** dependable, dignified, professional, respectable, secure, sophisticated, expensive
R: 000 G: 153 B: 102 009966		**Green #1** botanical, ecological, natural, lucky, healthy, healing, cool
R: 102 G: 204 B: 153 66CC99		**Muted Medium Light Green** healthy, relaxing, soothing, peaceful, natural, cool
R: 000 G: 204 B: 102 00CC66		**Green #2** botanical, ecological, natural, lucky, fresh, refreshing, healthy, cool

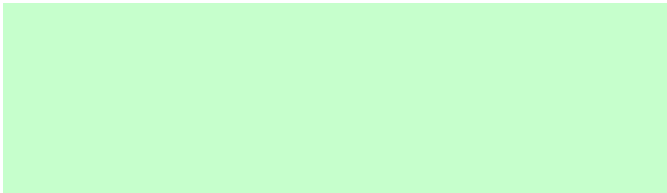| RGB / Hex		Name & Symbolism
R: 000 G: 102 B: 051 006633		**Dark Forest Green** dependable, professional, secure, botanical, ecological, natural, steadfast, healthy, quiet, cool
R: 153 G: 255 B: 153 99FF99		**Medium Light Green** natural, healthy, soothing, refreshing, botanical, fresh, cool
R: 204 G: 255 B: 204 CCFFCC		**Light Green** peaceful, soothing, healthy, refreshing, cool
R: 000 G: 051 B: 000 003300		**Dark Green (yellow-based)** earthy, woodsy, dependable, natural, ecological, steadfast, secure, wise

Green Swatches 17-20

RGB / Hex		Name & Symbolism
R: 102 G: 204 B: 102 66CC66		**Muted Medium Light Green (yellow-based)** botanical, natural, healthy, raw, refreshing, cool
R: 102 G: 153 B: 102 669966		**Muted Medium Light Green (yellow-based)** natural, botanical, peaceful, dependable, calming, cool
R: 153 G: 204 B: 153 99CC99		**Light Celery Green** natural, botanical, dependable, calming, delicate, cool
R: 000 G: 255 B: 000 00FF00		**Lime Green** primordial, extraterrestrial, electric, raw, stimulating, acidic, sour, cool

Green Swatches 21-24

Name & Symbolism

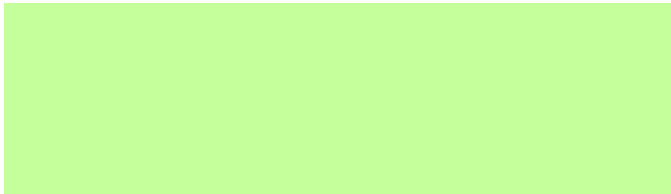| RGB / Hex		Name & Symbolism
R: 051 G: 102 B: 000 336600		**Dark Avocado Green** earthy, botanical, natural, cool
R: 102 G: 204 B: 000 66CC00		**Bright Avocado Green** botanical, raw, acidic, primordial, sour
R: 204 G: 255 B: 153 CCFF99		**Muted Light Avocado Green** botanical, refreshing, natural, healthy, cool
R: 153 G: 255 B: 000 99FF00		**Bright Yellow Green #1** primordial, electric, astringent, extraterrestrial, acidic, raw, sour

R: 153
G: 153
B: 000
999900

Olive Yellow Green
earthy, raw, sour

R: 153
G: 153
B: 102
999966

Muted Yellow Green
earthy, restful

R: 204
G: 204
B: 153
CCCC99

Light Muted Yellow Green
natural, restful, subdued

The Symbolism of Green ▶
(Text)

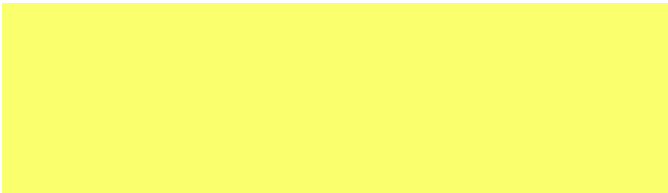| RGB / Hex		Name & Symbolism
R: 204 G: 255 B: 000 CCFF00		**Bright Chartreuse Yellow** sour, primordial, electric, astringent, raw, acidic
R: 204 G: 204 B: 000 CCCC00		**Dark Chartreuse Yellow** botanical, primordial, earthy
R: 255 G: 255 B: 000 FFFF00		**Yellow** joyous, vibrant, spiritual, luminous, energizing, sunny, floral, tangy, citric, warm
R: 255 G: 255 B: 102 FFFF66		**Medium Light Yellow** joyous, lively, spiritual, luminous, sunny, summery, floral, warm

RGB Hex	Yellow Swatches 5-8	Name & Symbolism

R: 255
G: 255
B: 204
FFFFCC
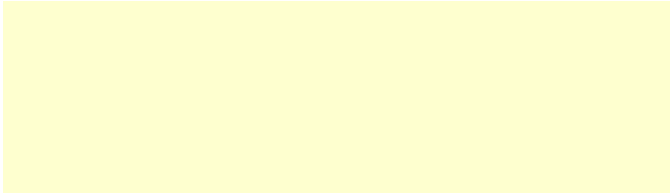
Light Yellow
mellow, optimistic, cheerful, spring-like, warm

R: 255
G: 204
B: 000
FFCC00

Golden Yellow
radiant, cheerful, stimulating, energizing, invigorating, sunny, floral, fruity, warm

R: 153
G: 102
B: 000
996600

Golden Yellow Brown
earthy, natural, healthy, woodsy, autumnal, warm

R: 204
G: 153
B: 051
CC9933

Light Golden Tan
earthy, natural, healthy, tasty, arid, warm

R: 204 **G: 102** **B: 000** **CC6600**	**Dark Yellow Orange** zesty, spicy, tasty, healthy, invigorating, earthy, autumnal, warm
R: 255 **G: 153** **B: 000** **FF9900**	**Yellow Orange** stimulating, healthy, invigorating, energizing, happy, sunny, tasty, fruity, warm
R: 255 **G: 204** **B: 102** **FFCC66**	**Light Yellow Orange** cheerful, friendly, healthy, invigorating, sunny, warm

The Symbolism of Yellow ▶
(Text)

RGB Hex	Orange Swatches 1-4	Name & Symbolism
R: 255 G: 102 B: 000 FF6600		**Orange** stimulating, energizing, exciting, cheerful, fruity, autumnal, inexpensive, warm
R: 204 G: 102 B: 051 CC6633		**Terra-cotta Orange** zesty, spicy, natural, invigorating, tasty, healthy, earthy, autumnal, warm
R: 255 G: 153 B: 102 FF9966		**Light Salmon Orange** healthy, friendly, cheerful, invigorating, tasty, warm
R: 255 G: 204 B: 153 FFCC99		**Light Orange** healthy, cheerful, tasty, flesh-like, healthy, warm

R: 204
G: 051
B: 000
CC3300

Dark Red Orange
invigorating, spicy, tasty, earthy,
autumnal, warm

R: 255
G: 051
B: 000
FF3300

Red-Orange
exciting, aggressive, invigorating, raw,
impulsive, tasty, hot

The Symbolism of Orange ▶
(Text)

|		
R: 102 G: 000 B: 000 660000		**Dark Red Brown** dependable, strong, robust, friendly, natural, earthy, tasty, warm
R: 153 G: 051 B: 000 993300		**Russet Brown** earthy, natural, tasty, spicy, autumnal, warm
R: 153 G: 102 B: 051 996633		**Medium Light Brown** dependable, friendly, tasty, healthy, earthy, natural, woodsy, warm
R: 204 G: 153 B: 102 CC9966		**Light Coffee Brown** earthy, tasty, friendly, natural, healthy, warm

R: 051
G: 000
B: 000
330000
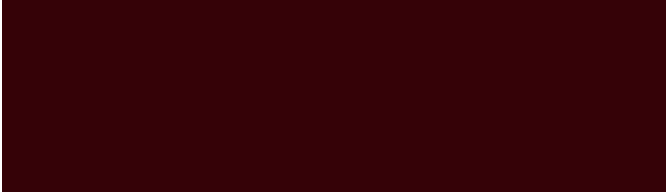
Dark Chocolate Brown
dependable, strong, sturdy, natural, rich, tasty, earthy, woodsy, warm

R: 102
G: 051
B: 051
663333

Medium Brown
dependable, relaxing, friendly, natural, tasty, earthy, woodsy, warm

R: 153
G: 102
B: 102
996666

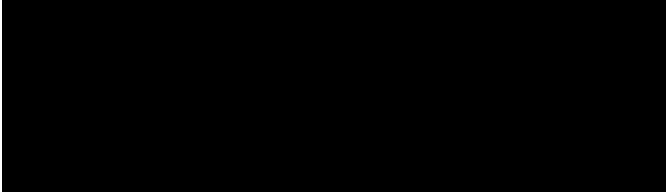**Mauve Brown**
relaxing, friendly, natural, tasty, warm

The Symbolism of Brown ▶
(Text)

Black & White Swatches

R: 000
G: 000
B: 000
000000

Black
powerful, sophisticated, strong, sexy,
magical, demonic, ominous, expensive

The Symbolism of Black ▶
(Text)

R: 255
G: 255
B: 255
FFFFFF

White
pure, spiritual, clean, sterile, truthful,
chaste, innocent, peaceful

The Symbolism of White ▶
(Text)

R: 102
G: 102
B: 102
666666

Medium Gray
dignified, intelligent, high tech, creative, efficient, expensive, unadorned, subtle, neutral, cool

R: 204
G: 204
B: 204
CCCCCC

Light Gray
calming, unadorned, unpretentious, neutral, subtle, subdued, cool

The Symbolism of Gray ▶
(Text)

APPENDIX

About the Author

Source Information

Publications from Colorcom and Color Voodoo

About the author

Jill Morton is one of the foremost color experts and researchers in the world today. She holds the highest academic credentials – a Masters Degree in Art – and has served as faculty at several universities.

In her primary work as a color consultant, she brings the utmost level of technical and professional knowledge about color to a wide range of projects. Psychological color impact, innovative color combinations, attractive color harmonies, visual ergonomics and marketing trends are the critical factors she addresses in prescribing successful solutions for her global clients. Her portfolio includes projects for Nokia, Dow Chemical and Eastman Kodak as well as many others in almost every industry sector.

Ms. Morton's opinions and research have been quoted and featured in major publications such as Fortune, USA Today, American Demographics, The Chicago Tribune, and House and Garden.

As director of the International Color Research Institute, she manages the demographic data in the Global Color Database, a one-of-a-kind compilation of information about color preferences and associations gathered from over 60,000 people worldwide, since 1997.

E-mail: consult@colorcom.com

Source Information

Much of the color symbolism information in this publication is the result of years of research and data gathered from "The Global Color Survey" database at the Color Matters web site - http://express.colorcom.com/colorsurvey/

Other information about the symbolism of colors in global and Western cultures was derived from other electronic (PDF and eBook) publications:

Morton, Jill, *Global Color: Clues and Taboos* Colorcom, 2004
Morton, Jill, *50 Symbolic Color Schemes*. Colorcom, 1997
Morton, Jill, *Color Logic*. Colorcom, 1998
Morton, Jill, *Colors That Sell: Tried and Tested Color Schemes*. Colorcom, 2004

Note: Bookstore information can be found on the last page of this publication.

PUBLICATIONS FROM COLORCOM

"A Guide to Color Symbolism"
(Color Voodoo #1)

"Global Color: Clues and Taboos"
(Color Voodoo #2)

"50 Symbolic Color Schemes"
(Color Voodoo #3)

"Color Logic"
(Color Voodoo #4)

"Color Logic for Web Site Design"
 (Color Voodoo #5)

"Color Voodoo for the Office"
(Color Voodoo #6)

"Color Voodoo for E-Commerce"
(Color Voodoo #7)

"Color Logic for PowerPoint®"
 (Color Voodoo #8)

"Colors that Sell: Tried and Tested Color Schemes"
(Color Voodoo #9)

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Color Voodoo - http://www.colorvoodoo.com
Colorcom Publishing - http://www.colorcom.com/colorpub.html