

How to make your own colour palette

If you are involved in Desk Top Publishing (DTP) or making a website, you may find that you have problems getting the colours on the page to 'fit together'. A simple way around this issue is to make your own colour palette.

You may wish to invoke a sense that you get from a particular photograph or work of art, or you may just want to ensure your colour combinations are coherent.

Firstly, take the basic colour or the image you wish to develop the colour palette from. In this case I have decided to take the yellow colour from a photo of a tree.

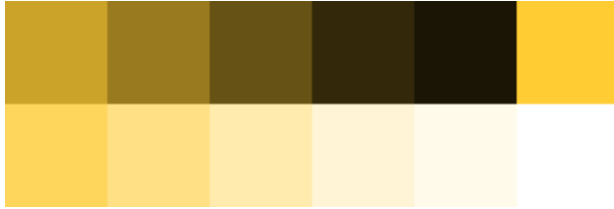


Next open your image editing software – I have used Fireworks, and open a new png file measuring 300px by 100px with a white canvas or background, and draw a black rectangle of 300px by 50px on the top half of the background.



Draw a square of 10px by 10px and place in the top left of the picture and copy it and paste it 11 times to cover the entire picture

Then set each square with a different opacity – those on the left at 80%, the next pair at 60%, then 40%, then 20 % and then 10%. Then set the top right square to 100% and the bottom right to 0%, giving the following image.

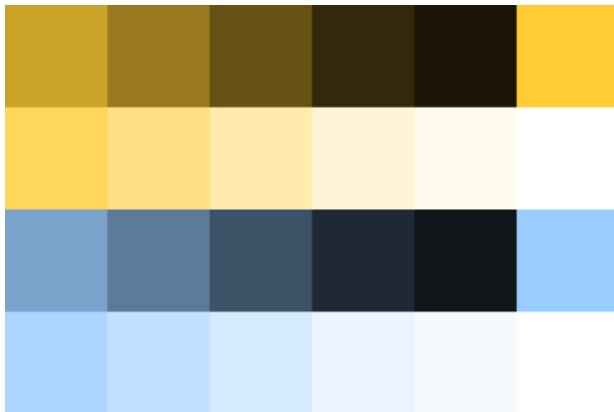


Save the resulting image as a jpeg. It now provides a range of colours based upon the yellow colour in the top right and ranging from near black to completely white through a range of yellows and browns. This can then be used as a colour picker for your DTP or web design projects.

The principle is simple. The original colour chosen never changes; it is simply more or less transparent with a black or a white background. Changing it from a png to a jpg flattens the layers and thus each square becomes the new visible colour.

A more extensive colour palette can be developed by using two or more of the colours from the original image (in this case the tree).

If for example we repeat the process for the colour of the sky in the same picture we can expand the colour palette into a range of blues.



There are automated colour palette generators on the internet which would be much quicker, but it is always useful to know how to do it yourself.