



Mr. Daniel Boaglio

The author of this article (originally posted on LinkedIn), Mr. Daniel Boaglio is PhD in Physical Chemistry, Technical Advisor for flexible packaging, from design to end user, including design, prepress, inks, flexo/gravure and lamination.

Mr. Boaglio resides and operates out of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

He is the author of the book "Mirada Diferente" which is available as a [free download](https://www.amazon.com/Mirada-Diferente-Flexografia-Huecograbado-Spanish-ebook/dp/B0CW1F1CDM) on Amazon see <https://www.amazon.com/Mirada-Diferente-Flexografia-Huecograbado-Spanish-ebook/dp/B0CW1F1CDM>

Contact: boagliod@gmail.com or by mobile phone +5411 54037777

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Color Wars: How SMS is Sending PMS to Retirement

(Copied from an [article](#) written by Mr. Boaglio and posted on LinkedIn on July 3rd 2024).

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Just as Affinity Suite is toppling Adobe, the same revolution is happening in the world of color management. Let's delve into my take on these two titans: PMS vs. SMS.

The Pantone Matching System (PMS) has been the venerable grandfather in the graphic design industry, dictating which shade of green or blue is "correct" since time immemorial. However, like many venerable elders, PMS is starting to show its age. Enter the Icelandic Color Management System (SMS), the new bright star in the design firmament, seemingly determined to send PMS into a well-deserved retirement.

First, let's talk about accessibility. PMS still insists on its printed guides, those dusty tomes that designers have been lugging around since the 60s. SMS, on the other hand, has modernized and offers its colors in PDF and sRGB formats. Why carry a heavy book when you can have everything on your tablet or screen? Additionally, SMS is also available in ASE/ACO, the standard digital formats in graphic design, making integration a walk in the park.

Then there's the matter of color accuracy. PMS relies on fixed recipes and CMYK values, which are adequate if you live in the past. SMS, however, uses fixed LAB values, the scientifically most accurate way to define color. LAB colors are calculated based on how the human eye actually perceives color, ensuring impressive consistency across different devices and lighting conditions. In comparison, PMS's CMYK colors are as precise as a sundial in a sandstorm.

SMS's compatibility with sRGB is another win. sRGB is the standard for most current screens and digital devices. Want your design to look the same on a phone screen, laptop, and TV? SMS guarantees it. PMS, with its nostalgic attachment to printed guides, simply can't compete in this aspect.

And finally, access. Sure, PMS offers Pantone CONNECT Premium, a digital service, but it requires a premium subscription. Because, apparently, even colors come at a price. SMS, in contrast, offers its digital formats without those pesky extra costs.

In conclusion, while PMS may have a rich, nostalgia-filled history, SMS is the future of color design. With its scientific accuracy, digital accessibility, and modern compatibility, SMS is ready to take the reins. It's time for PMS to enjoy its retirement while SMS leads the way to a brighter, more colorful future.

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Buen Provecho!