
Colorimetry —

Part 4:
CIE 1976 L*a*b* colour space

Colorimétrie —

*Partie 4: Espace chromatique L*a*b* CIE 1976*

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by the International Commission on Illumination (CIE) in cooperation with Technical Committee ISO/TC 274, *Light and lighting*.

This first edition of ISO/CIE 11664-4 cancels and replaces ISO 11664-4:2008 | CIE 11664-4:2007, of which it constitutes a minor revision. The document has been editorially revised as per current ISO rules and the references have been updated.

A list of all parts in the ISO 11664 and ISO/CIE 11664 series can be found on the ISO website.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

The three-dimensional colour space produced by plotting CIE tristimulus values (X, Y, Z) in rectangular coordinates is not visually uniform, nor is the (x, y, Y) space nor the two-dimensional CIE (x, y) chromaticity diagram. Equal distances in these spaces do not represent equally perceptible differences between colour stimuli. For this reason, in 1976, the CIE introduced and recommended two new spaces (known as CIELAB and CIELUV) whose coordinates are nonlinear functions of X, Y and Z . The recommendation was put forward in an attempt to unify the then very diverse practice in uniform colour spaces and associated colour-difference formulae^{[1][2]}. Both these more-nearly uniform colour spaces have become well accepted and widely used. Numerical values representing approximately the magnitude of colour differences can be described by simple Euclidean distances in the spaces or by more sophisticated formulae that improve the correlation with the perceived size of differences.

The purpose of this document is to define procedures for calculating the coordinates of the CIE 1976 $L^*a^*b^*$ (CIELAB) colour space and the Euclidean colour difference values based on these coordinates. This document does not cover more sophisticated colour-difference formulae based on CIELAB, such as the CMC formula^[3], the CIE94 formula^[4], the DIN99 formula^[5], and the CIEDE2000 formula^{[6][7]}, nor does it cover the alternative uniform colour space, CIELUV^[8].

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1 Scope

This document specifies a method of calculating the coordinates of the CIE 1976 L*a*b* colour space, including correlates of lightness, chroma and hue. It includes two methods for calculating Euclidean distances in this space to represent the perceived magnitude of colour differences.

This document is applicable to tristimulus values calculated using colour-matching functions of the CIE 1931 standard colorimetric system or the CIE 1964 standard colorimetric system. This document can be used for the specification of colour stimuli perceived as belonging to a reflecting or transmitting object, where a three-dimensional space more uniform than tristimulus space is required.

This document does not apply to colour stimuli perceived as belonging to an area that appears to be emitting light as a primary light source, or that appears to be specularly reflecting such light.

This document is applicable to self-luminous displays, such as cathode ray tubes, if they are being used to simulate reflecting or transmitting objects and if the stimuli are appropriately normalized.

Calculating the reverse transformation is shown in [Annex A](#).

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

CIE S 017, *ILV: International Lighting Vocabulary*

ISO/CIE 11664-1, *Colorimetry Part 1 — CIE Standard Colorimetric Observers*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in CIE S 017 apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>