

Lightroom

... Introduction

There are loads of applications that you can use to edit photos. They variously only run on Windows, macOS, IOS or Android. Some run on a combination of all of these platforms. To name a few we have Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Lightroom, Adobe Express, Capture One, Snapseed, On1, Skylum, GIMP, Darktable, RawTherapee, etc, etc.

None of these provide DAM - Digital Asset Management, a database about your images – except for Lightroom Classic.

Lightroom

... Introduction

There are two Versions of Lightroom.

Lightroom (formerly Lightroom CC), but also referred to as Lightroom Mobile, Lightroom for IOS !! – cloud-based versions, only versions that runs on tablets and smartphones but can also run on Windows and macOS.

Lightroom Classic – desktop version, only runs on Windows and macOS. Everything in this workshop is about Lightroom Classic.

Adobe Photography Plan £9.98/month - Lightroom Classic, Lightroom & Photoshop including all updates. Can reduce to as little as £6/month with Amazon Prime seasonal specials.

Lightroom

Lightroom Classic

The Catalog, Adobe Camera Raw (ACR)

The Catalog

A database that contains

- pointers to all your catalogued (imported) image files.
- all the information about your image files including EXIF and IPTC data, keywords, ratings and user comments.
- all the information about how you've processed the images.

When you Import your images into Lightroom Classic the images files, your photos, stay exactly where they were and remain completely unaltered – they are never overwritten by Lightroom.

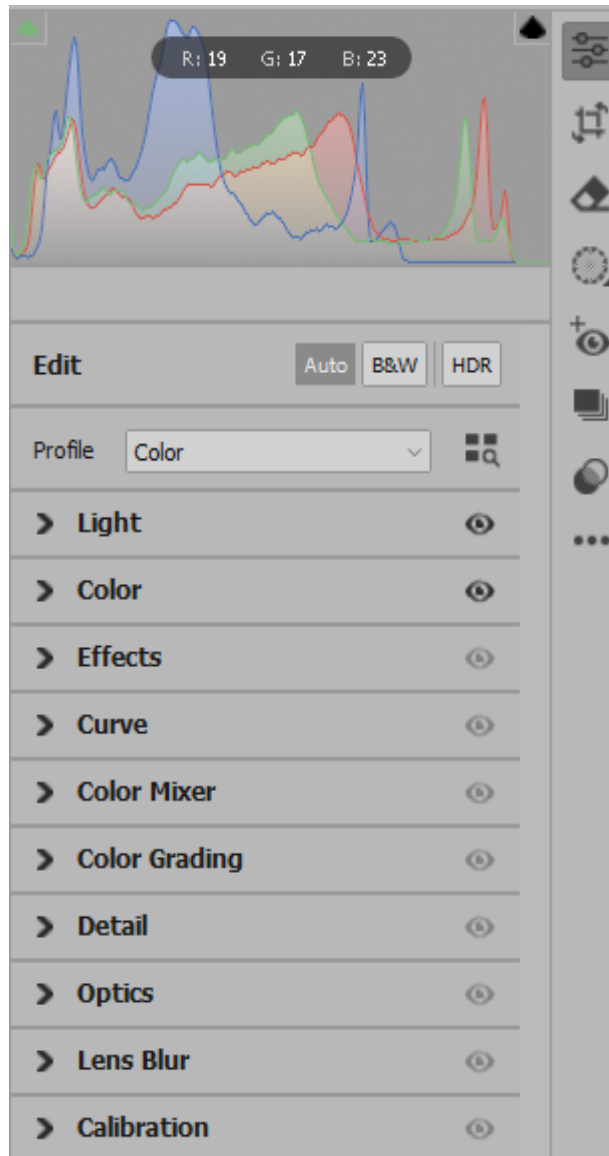
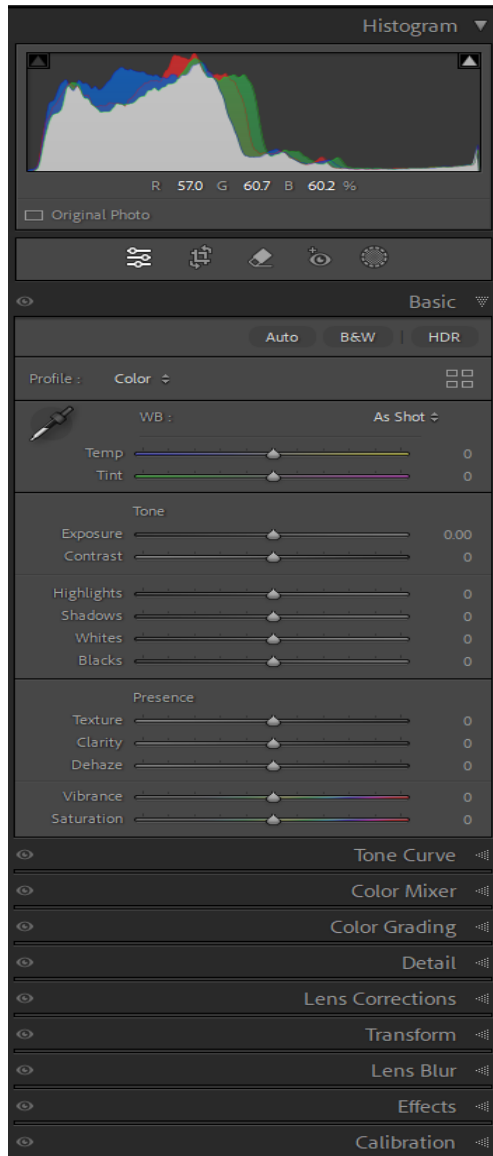
The catalog only contains information about your images and the processing history, it does not contain the image files themselves.

Lightroom

Adobe Camera Raw (ACR)

The engine at the heart of processing all your images in Lightroom. Also runs within Photoshop, where, by default it is used to process raw images but can also be used to edit JPGs and TIFFs.

Lightroom uses ACR for all image types although of course with a more limited scope for tweaking JPGs than raws (8 bit vs 14bit). If you've only ever used Photoshop the interface in Lightroom will be quite familiar. User-wise the two interfaces function in much the same way.



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More about the catalog

Creating a catalog, The Import process.

Creating a catalog

File, New Catalog. I haven't come across any scenario where I need to create or use any more than one. Your image management process may vary. There is no practical upper size limit to the catalog. Ideally, as the catalog is used so much, it should be created on your fastest local storage device, usually / hopefully an SSD.

The Import Process

The first step is to get your images onto your local storage (hard disc, SSD). You can import directly from your memory card to achieve this with the Copy option but.....

From a safety viewpoint I would always recommend copying, not moving, your images from the memory card to local storage first using use File Explorer or Finder. Then import your images from local storage once they've been copied.

Lightroom

... More about the catalog

During the import Lightroom will read your files, capturing data to populate (update) the catalog (database). It records where the files are located and reads the embedded EXIF data to add to the database. For raw files it also reads the information that will allow it to demosaic the image successfully.

Demosaicing is the process of converting the camera's bits into a usable image. The format of raw files vary for each manufacturer and even for different camera models by the same manufacturer. The introduction of new camera models being one of the reasons to keep ACR up to date – demosaicing algorithms are pretty much specific to each camera model. Older versions of Lightroom and more specifically older versions of ACR may not support your current or new camera. ACR updates are free but not all versions of ACR are compatible with older versions of Lightroom and Photoshop.

Lightroom

The Power of the Catalog

Keywords - adding information about your images, Searching for images

Lightroom gives us the power to search for images in a number of ways, but we need to put a little work in for some of them to be truly useful.

Keywords - adding information about your images

Searching for images

We search from the Library Filter panel in the Library Module.

Library Filter, Metadata - e.g. all the photos we've taken with a particular lens, all the images we've shot at ISO6400, all the images taken in December

Library Filter, Attribute - e.g. all yellow labelled images, all five star images.

Library Filter, Text - e.g. search all the EXIF and IPTC information and our own keywords and text.

We can search for faces

We can use Smart Collections to keep dynamically updated search results.

I'm sure further AI enhancements will come to the search process, possibly based on the content of the image, allowing us to search for "happy", "sad", "old".

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Lightroom and Photoshop Comparison

Lightroom Classic and Photoshop are both powerful tools for photo editing, but they serve different purposes and excel in distinct areas.

Workflow and Organization

Lightroom Classic: Designed for photographers to organize, batch-process, and edit large numbers of photos efficiently. It has a built-in library and catalog system, making it easy to manage and organize thousands of images.

Photoshop: Primarily an image editor without a photo management system. It's focused on single-image editing and doesn't have organizational tools like Lightroom's catalog. For photographers managing lots of images, Photoshop requires pairing with something like Bridge for organization.

Batch Processing

Lightroom Classic: Excellent for batch editing, allowing you to apply the same edits to many photos at once (for example, adjusting white balance on multiple shots from the same session).

Photoshop: Limited batch processing options. It's possible with Actions, but it's more complex and doesn't have Lightroom's ease of synchronizing edits across multiple photos.

Lightroom

... Lightroom and Photoshop Comparison

Editing Capabilities

Lightroom Classic: Basic to intermediate level adjustments but evolving to add advanced options including selective edits with brushes and gradients and masks. It's designed to enhance photos but lacks Photoshop's ultimate level of control.

Photoshop: More more powerful tools like layers, masks, liquify, cloning, and extensive retouching options, allowing composite images, graphic designs, and more complex edits.

Non-Destructive Editing

Lightroom Classic: All edits in Lightroom are non-destructive, meaning they don't alter the original file. Lightroom saves changes in the catalog, allowing you to revert to the original at any time.

Photoshop: Primarily uses destructive editing, where changes directly affect the image unless you use specific techniques, like working on duplicate layers or using Smart Objects.

Ease of Use

Lightroom Classic: More user-friendly, with a simpler, intuitive interface. Edits in Lightroom are typically sliders and presets, which makes the learning curve easier.

Photoshop: Has a much steeper learning curve with numerous panels, tools, and features. Photoshop can be overwhelming for beginners. It's highly flexible but requires time to master.

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... Lightroom and Photoshop Comparison

Output and Export Options

Lightroom Classic: Offers streamlined export options tailored for photographers, with presets for different resolutions and formats (e.g., for web or print). You can export many images with consistent settings quickly.

Photoshop: Also supports exporting in multiple formats, but it's not as fast or efficient for handling a large batch of images.

Ease of Use

Lightroom Classic: Generally more user-friendly, with a simpler, intuitive interface. Edits in Lightroom are typically sliders and presets, which makes the learning curve less steep.

Photoshop: Has a much steeper learning curve. With numerous panels, tools, and features, Photoshop can be overwhelming for beginners. It's highly flexible but requires time to master.

Summary

Lightroom Classic is a powerful organizational and batch-processing tool tailored for photographers. Lightroom allows for a streamlined workflow from import to export.

Photoshop is a comprehensive, layer-based editor that offers unparalleled editing capabilities but is less suited for organizing and batch-processing large photo collections.

Many photographers use Lightroom Classic for organizing and basic edits, then move images to Photoshop for more detailed work.

Lightroom

Lightroom Classic modules

Library

- curating, rating, organising your images, Quick Develop

Develop

- processing your images

Map

- another way of finding images based on location

Book

- create books for printing by Blurb or yourself

Slideshow

- create and run slideshows

Print

- format and print

Web

- rudimentary web page creation

Lightroom

A Walk Around Some More Features

Global vs Local adjustments

Global adjustments

Adjustments that change all pixels in the image. All the usual options, exposure, contrast, texture, clarity, tone curve, color mixing, grading, transformations, sharpening, one of the newest features Lens Blur. In my opinion and in reality, some of these adjustments require a fast processor and/or fast graphics card (GPU) to be usable, especially with high megapixel images. You might be more patient!

Also worthy of a mention, Denoise (noise reduction). This creates a DNG as a denoised copy. I believe it's a very real replacement for Topaz Denoise – though definitely one that benefits from a fast GPU.

Lightroom

... A Walk Around Some More Features

Local adjustments

Adjustments that change pixels in specific areas through masking. Many options again, most replicating what you can do globally. Many driven by AI to automatically mask objects to be affected. Brushes, gradients, subject, sky, background, color range, luminance range, depth range (change focus), even specific parts of a face!

Presets

Adobe, OEM, your own.

More to follow in the next session !!