

# THE DIGITAL DARKROOM

## ORGANISING YOUR PHOTOS ON A HARD DRIVE

Having an organised system for your photos will assist in finding a particular photo. People do use different systems but there are two that are good to think about. Which ever way you choose make sure that you have a **master folder called PHOTOS** or something similar. Then use subfolders inside this main folder. It will aid making backups.

1. **Date organised** – good for people who remember when they took photos.

The Year eg. 2024

Month – Jan

Date yymmdd and description

Eg. 240305 Toowoomba Show

Then the files of photos

The year, month, Date and description are subfolders under the master folder.

2. **Subject organised** - Other people use a system making use of **subjects** photographed. Think about what you usually photograph and make subfolders under the master folder PHOTOS.

Eg. Subfolders

Flora

Animals

Events

Travel

Family

People

Then each of these subfolders may contain other subfolders.

Eg. Travel

Europe

Asia

Pacific

And these may be further subdivided if needed.

Eg. Europe

Germany

Austria

**Then as you download your photos from a memory card, put the photos into the organised structure whether you are using a date or a subject system.**

Remember that the metadata of an image will contain the date that the image was taken (assuming the date system in your camera is correct). Hence you will always be able to find photos taken in any one year etc.

## **BACKUP**

This is a crucial and critical step. Make sure that you have at least one copy of these files on another drive. Best practice is to have three copies with one being off-site. Don't be sorry by not having a backup! Drives do corrupt!

## **CATALOGUING YOUR FILES**

### **1. LIGHTROOM CLASSIC**

The program Lightroom uses a catalogue to keep track of the location of your files. It is this catalogue that tells Lightroom which drive, folder and subfolder your image is in. The catalogue is not the actual images but contains a thumbnail of the images called previews. This catalogue should also be backed up on a regular basis depending on how frequently and the amount of editing done. Most often a weekly backup would be fine. However, if you do a lot of editing on any day, it will be good to back this up.

### **2. ADOBE BRIDGE**

This is a free program put out by Adobe. Whilst many people use Lightroom Classic, others may use Bridge for part or all of their management of images. Bridge is particularly useful when you do not want to import images into the Lightroom Catalogue, eg. When viewing other people's images. The other advantage is that you do not have to import your images as in Lightroom. Bridge uses the file system that you used on your hard drive. Each folder can be quickly located and the images contained in that folder are displayed.

3. There are other programs that may be used to catalogue your photos but we will not be using them.

## SETTING UP A CATALOGUE

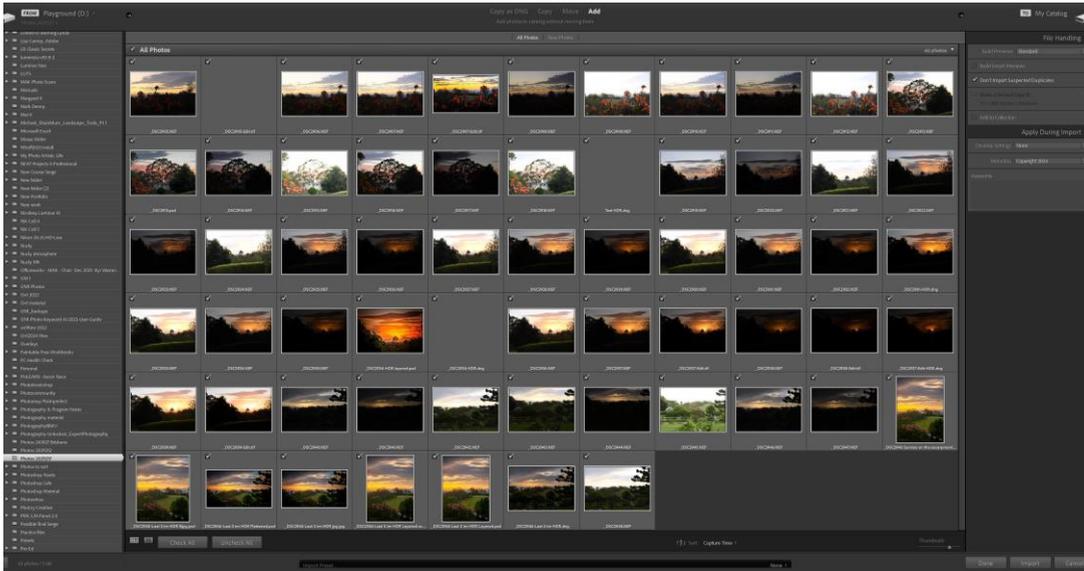
When you open Lightroom for the first time you will need to set up a catalogue. If for some reason you need to set up a new catalogue then Under the File Menu select new catalogue. You will be prompted for a location and a folder name. Choosing the name “Lightroom catalogue” will enable easy identification of the folder. It is best to have this catalogue on an internal drive in your computer as it will run faster than if it is stored on an external drive. By default Lightroom stores this catalogue in the users picture folder but an alternative place may be selected. Note that only ONE catalogue is needed. A catalogue may manage thousands of photos.

Under the Edit Menu select catalogue setting and on the metadata tab tick “automatically write changes into .xmp”. This is a small text file attached to each image file which contains the edited changes and which may be read by several other image editing programs.

You will get the opportunity to set up a backup catalogue file when you first save your catalogue. You will also be able to select how frequently you back up this catalogue.

## IMPORTING PHOTOS INTO LIGHTROOM

In the library module there is a button near the bottom left labelled IMPORT. Select this and a screen similar to that in the diagram below opens.



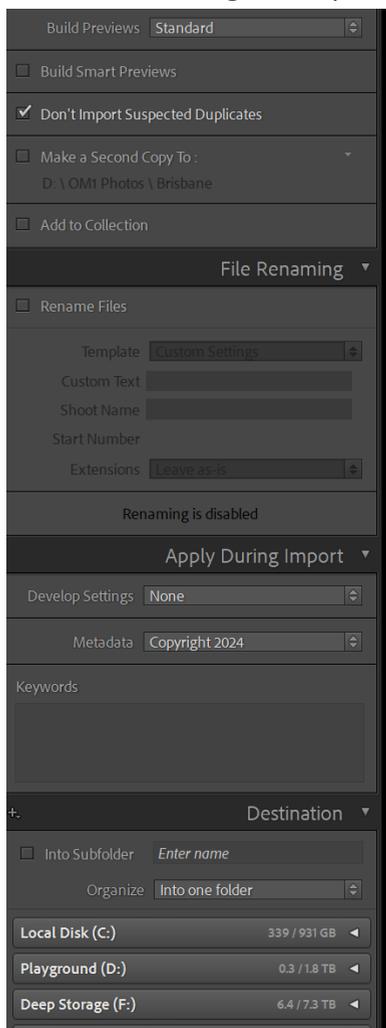
In the left side panel select the location of the images you have already stored on the hard drive. Previews of the images will appear in the centre panel. Underneath this panel are two buttons allowing you to select all or deselect all.

Using these two buttons enables the images you want to be in the catalogue to be selected.

At the top of the centre panel are four choices – Copy as DNG, Copy, Move and Add. In this case we do not need to copy the images as they are already on the hard drive. Select ADD which will add the images to the catalogue. The catalogue will create previews and store the location of the original images. It does not copy them when ADD is selected.

In the right panel make sure that the catalogue is selected.

Then work through the options in the right panels. Firstly select build previews. I generally



select STANDARD from the options. Don't select 1:1 as this will create previews the same size as the originals and take up a lot of drive space.

Leave SMART PREVIEWS unchecked. These are only useful if you are travelling and not taking the drive on which the images are stored. You are then able to edit using these smart previews and then when the drive is connected again, the edited images will sync.

Don't import suspected duplicates may be ticked as desired.

Make a second copy will slow down the importing process and I personally don't use it because I have other backup systems.

There is an option for file renaming if desired and then a section for things to be applied during import. I usually put my copyright data into the metadata section here. Other things that might go under develop settings are remove chromatic aberration.

The destination section will only be applicable if you were copying or moving files. But if you download to your hard drive first before any importing, then this section is not necessary.

Once you are ready and have the images selected (showing the tick mark) then select the **IMPORT BUTTON**.

Two processes will occur – the importing into the catalogue and the creation of previews.

This will be seen in two progress bars in the library module and the image previews will appear. The import process is now finished.

### **BUT WHAT IF I HAVE MORE THAN ONE CATALOGUE AND EVERYTHING IS A MESS?**

Often people have created more than one catalogue and have a mess.

Lightroom provides a way to deal with this.

Make sure that all your catalogues have automatically write changes to .xmp ticked. (see earlier on how to do this)

Then select what is your best or main catalogue or if necessary, make a new one. Then under the File Menu select the option IMPORT FROM ANOTHER CATALOGUE.

Then locate one of your other catalogues and select it. Lightroom will import the data from it. When you are sure that everything has transferred to your new/main catalogue, then delete the other catalogue. Continue to do this process you have only one catalogue.

Note that you are only deleting catalogues not the images.

### **METADATA**

In the library module there is a Metadata Panel in the right-side panels. It may be helpful to customise this as it can be useful in cleaning up your catalogue and for deciding if an image is a duplicate.

To do this select one image. In the metadata panel make sure that "Default" is selected. Then at the bottom of the information there is a customise button which allows selection of the metadata displayed. Some to add are:

Absolute file path

Folder

Capture date

Capture date/time

Camera

Sidecar files

Original Name

Preserved file name

File Name

Title

## COLLECTIONS

Using Collections and Collection Sets makes using Lightroom Classic easier and help you get the best out of lightroom.

Collections are also the key to using output modules like the Print and Book modules, and to setting up a portfolio website using Adobe Portfolio. Collections are found in each module but folders are only in the library module.

With folders an image may only be in one folder unless you make duplicates. but you can add your photos to as many Collections as you want.

Collections may be synced so you can view them in the Lightroom for mobile apps on a phone or tablet. They are flexible and let you organize your photos in the way that suits you best. They also enable the use of services like Lightroom for mobile and Adobe Portfolio.

**A Collection** is a virtual folder that you can add photos to. You can add as many photos to a Collection as you want.

**A Collection Set** is another type of virtual folder that can hold Collections and other Collection Sets, but not photos. You use Collection Sets to organize your Collections.

**A Smart Collection** is one created using search criteria. Smart Collections are set up using the search criteria that are also found in the Filter Bar. (Definitions from Andrew Gibson).

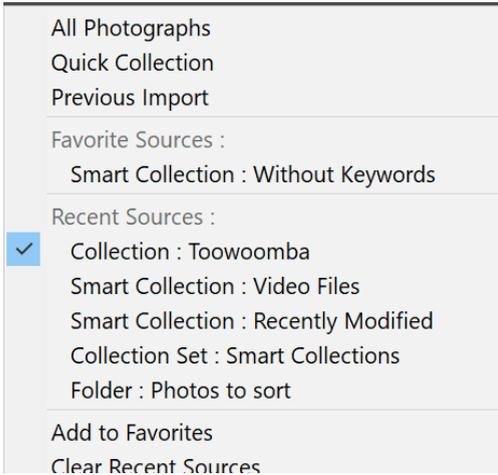
Other collections found in Lightroom are book collections, print collections, sideshow collections and web collection.

### Collection List getting large?

You can easily find the collection you are searching for it by adding it to favourites or by giving it a coloured label.

To add a collection to favourites. Click on the collection in the collections list. Then in the filmstrip click on the grey chevron at the end of the name bar.





In the dialogue box select **Add to favourites**.

**Another method is to use a coloured label**

In the collections list right click on the right hand side of a collection and choose a coloured label. You may assign meanings to the labels.

A third way of selecting a collection is to use the search field at the top of the list of collections.