

Lightroom Spring Cleaning Webinar with Laura Shoe

April 22, 2017

Answers to Questions from Chat Log

Please note that virtually all topics covered here in this Q&A are covered very extensively in my [Lightroom Fundamentals & Beyond video series](#), with the exception of those on finding and eliminating duplicates. While I have given short answers below, I cannot repeat the depth of coverage that my video series provides. I spend a ton of time in that series on the catalog, organizing, and more generally on the Library module in Lightroom because those are the less intuitive parts of Lightroom – and the parts that will affect your sanity the most.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

For spring cleaning, would you suggest doing the cleanup in the order you presented (keywords, collections, files and folders, catalogs, duplicates)?

It doesn't matter what order you do your cleanup in – except it can be helpful to merge together catalogs if you have more than one, so that you have everything all in one catalog as you proceed through the rest of your cleanup. (It could otherwise be frustrating to get all your keywords tidied up, for example, and then see that merging in another catalog brought in a mess of additional keywords.)

REORGANIZING FOLDERS AND FILES

When you are doing these moves of folders and photos by dragging them using the Folders panel, are you actually moving them from where they were originally on the computer or external drive?

Yes – all moves using the Folders panel affect location on your hard drive. You're accomplishing the same thing as going outside of Lightroom and moving with Mac Finder or Windows Explorer/My Computer, but by doing the moves inside of Lightroom you're keeping Lightroom happy, as this way it can keep track of your files. (Watch the section on missing files and folders to understand what happens if you do go outside of Lightroom to move, rename or delete files.)

Why am I not able to see all my folders on the left side of my screen?

The Folders panel shows only folders that have photos that you have imported into Lightroom. To see more, go into the Import dialog and import other folders of photos (shown in the Source panel on the left.)

Instead of renaming a date file to include a description of the shoot, why not just keyword?

This is an example of how there are multiple ways to accomplish the same goal – being able to find your photos. I choose to include a description on my date folders so that when I want to access an entire shoot, I can easily do so with the Folders panel. I also add keywords to my photos so that I can find subsets of photos. Renaming date folders also gives beginners an easy way to get to photos, before they learn and get really comfortable with Lightroom’s filter bar, used to search for photos. Finally, renaming folders makes them decipherable outside of Lightroom, since the renaming you do will show up in Mac Finder or Windows Explorer/My Computer.

Is it mandatory to clean up my messed up folder structure if I get serious about keywords and collections?

No, it isn’t (other than finding missing folders and files) – see the answer to the previous question.

If you delete an original photo do you lose your virtual copies?

Yes. If you want to retain your virtual copies but not the original, swap one of your virtual copies with the master photo: select the virtual copy and then in the menu bar go to Photo>Set Copy as Master. Now you can delete the virtual copy that used to be the master photo.

If you delete a photo, does it go into the Trash / Recycle Bin?

Yes.

How to manually rearrange into date folders – any tricks?

Use the Library filter bar above the grid to filter by date – select one date, then all the photos, and drag them into a date folder that you have created in the Folders panel.

When I try to move a folder using the Folders panel I get the message that one already exists where I’m trying to move it to – but I don’t see it there.

Out on your hard drive you have a folder of that name in that location. (It’s not showing in Lightroom because you haven’t imported files from there.) You’ll need to go outside of Lightroom to your hard drive and determine why you have it – if it’s empty, delete it. If it has duplicates of the same photos you

have in Lightroom, delete these. If it has different photos, import this folder of photos into Lightroom, and then move the photos that are in the version your tried to move into this version.

I have so many missing files and folders since I did a massive reorganization outside of Lightroom that I would rather start over than go through the Find Missing Folder / Locate process. How can I do this?

You can remove some or all of your folders and photos and then import all photos that aren't in Lightroom. However, keep in mind that you will lose your work – keywords, stars and flags, editing, collections, etc. when you remove them. To remove a folder and its contents, right-click on the folder and choose Remove. To remove just photos, select them, right-click and choose Remove Photos..., and then if you get another dialog choose Remove.

Some of my photos on my hard drive have been removed, others never imported. How do I identify those so I can either permanently delete or bring into LR? (Other user: How do identify files on HD that have not been imported to LR?)

You can have Lightroom check any folder that shows in Lightroom to see if there are any photos that haven't yet been imported – for example, your Pictures folder. Right-click on the folder and choose Synchronize Folder. *Check only the first two boxes in this dialog dealing with importing* – be careful not to choose “Remove missing photos” without realizing that this will cause you to lose all editing on these photos – it's better to use the Find Missing Folder / Locate File process.

As far as those photos that have been deleted from your hard drive, as you sort through your missing folders and files, you'll need to look for these. When you don't find them and conclude that they have been deleted, right-click and remove them from Lightroom.

The Synchronize dialog shows 500 photos, but then none get imported – why is this?

If you are using the Synchronize option and see one count in the Synchronize dialog but then find that Lightroom imports fewer photos or none, this is because some or all of the files that Synchronize found are duplicates of photos already in your catalog – the Synchronize count does not take this into account.

Not only do I have too many missing files to find, but my photos are not organized into date folders. I would like to completely start over and have Lightroom reorganize my photos into date folders.

[Here is an article on the process to start over.](#) Please follow the steps carefully and note the issues associated with this!

What is the purpose for having Photos Go Here as a sub-folder of Pictures? Why not just have Pictures without the sub-folder?

Your Pictures folder can have lots of different files and folders in it – your Lightroom catalog folder, files that other programs create, like Mac Photos, etc. Without a Photos Go Here folder (or a folder named anything you'd like – Image Files, Lightroom Photos, etc) all of your year or date folders or subject file folders are just jumbled in with this varied content. Having a master photos folder keeps all of your photo files neatly contained. My organizational strategy is covered in depth in my Lightroom Fundamentals & Beyond video series.

In Finder (MAC) I have photos in Pictures and in LR Library. Both sections show up in LR when I edit. Does it make any difference if I leave them. Or, how can I merge the LR Library into Pictures?

Use the folder-dragging skills that I demonstrated in the webinar. (You certainly could leave them if you don't care that they aren't consolidated in one place.)

Is there any way to make the left column wider? My Folders panel won't show the full name of my folders.

Yes – hover over the right edge of the panel until you get the double arrow. Then click and drag to the right.

Note that the more levels of folders you reveal (with Show Parent Folder, as I demonstrated in the webinar), the wider this column has to be. This is why I don't reveal MacHD (or C:) \ Users \ Laura, and instead just reveal Pictures or other folders within Laura. If you want to hide the *highest level* folder, right-click on it and choose Hide This Parent. If you get a warning dialog that you may remove photos, cancel – this means that you have photos in these highest level folders – use the Folders panel to move them down into the subfolders they should be in.

If my hard drive fails, how easy is it to associate the catalog with backup photo files?

You'll use the Find Missing Folder process I covered to tell Lightroom where to find them. This is much quicker if all your photo folders are within one master folder and if that is displayed in Lightroom – this way you only have to do the process on this one highest-level folder.

What is an "imported on such-and-such a date" folder - how did it get there?

These folders are created in the Import dialog when you choose the Make a Second Copy to option to create an archive version of your photos – these duplicates aren't meant to be imported into Lightroom and won't be automatically.

I use the same style as you recommend (Year/ "Month-Day Shoot name"/ individual images). A friend just dumps every image under a single folder (Photos), claiming if a disk fails and everything has "?" and "!" icons, you can't relink to a different disk with an identical set of images with the same sub-folder structure - you'd have to relink each level at a time. Is he correct?

Keep all your photo subfolders (shoot folders) within a master photos folder, make sure this displays in Lightroom, and then you can relink that top folder if necessary – you accomplish the same thing as your friend but have a much more usable Folders panel and organized hard drive.

How do I move my catalog to another drive?

[Here's an article on how to move your catalog.](#)

How do I move my photos to another drive?

[Here is a video tutorial.](#) If you do this in Lightroom, please heed my warning from the webinar not to cancel a move while it is in progress! Another option is to do so outside of Lightroom, then right-click on your folder in Lightroom and choose Find Missing Folder or Update Folder Location, and navigate and select the folder on the new drive.

I have 10,000 photos – should I start a new catalog?

No. Having photos segmented into different catalogs puts a brick wall between them and makes it unnecessarily difficult to pull together subsets of photos, such as all your favorites. Adobe has found users who have millions of photos in one catalog, and I have a client who has over 1.2 million photos in his.

If you find that Lightroom is running slowly it most likely doesn't have to do with the size of the catalog. Victoria Bampton has an excellent series of articles on lightroomqueen.com on

improving Lightroom performance. If Lightroom is crashing it is also not due to the number of photos you have in your catalog.

If you reorganize within one LR catalog, will LR then know where the folder is when you open another catalog?

No – nothing done in one catalog is seen in another. This is another reason to work with one catalog, if possible.

I noticed you put iPhone images in a different area than your regular date folders – how?

Either manually move these photos using the Folders panel, or for future syncs from Lightroom mobile (CC only) go into Lightroom>Preferences (Mac) or Edit>Preferences (PC) and on the Lightroom mobile tab, specify where you'd like to store them and whether you'd like them organized into date folders.

How do we delete from the hard drive all photos not rated five star?

Do a filter using the filmstrip filter or the filter bar above the grid to show photos with ≤ 4 stars. Select all the photos that show, then hit the delete key and choose Delete from Disk. Note that this is only for ruthless editors – most of us do choose to keep photos that aren't our absolute best.

Do you Smart Preview all photos?

Since I work on a laptop, I create smart previews for photos on external drives so that I can edit without having the drive with me.

COLLECTIONS

You showed us how to create collection sets to organize collections into. How will collection sets work with my LR mobile?

Collection sets will not work with Lightroom mobile – in Lightroom mobile you will continue to see just your collections.

Is Lightroom more likely to crash if we use multiple layers of folders, collections, or keywords?

No.

BACKING UP

I have 107,000 pics in the catalog. It takes an hour to back up. Is this normal?

The longest part of the backup process is the Optimization step. Only perform optimization if you have noticed Lightroom slowing down or once in a while – otherwise uncheck this option in the backup dialog.

What cloud service does she use?

I use Backblaze to back up all my files from my internal and external hard drives. Crashplan is another popular service.

Does backing up the catalog back up my images?

No, backing up the catalog doesn't backup your images - only the work you have done in Lightroom (editing, flags, stars, collections, and other metadata.) You must back up your photos (and all files) separately outside of Lightroom using a backup program.

How do I rename my catalog?

[This short video tutorial shows how to safely rename your catalog.](#)

Please repeat if we can delete our LR 4 and 5 catalogues. I have LR 6 through Creative Cloud.

Yes. You can also uninstall the old software.

Can I delete Temporary Import Data-9-db-journal. amd Temporary Import Data-9DB files?

Yes – these are temporary files that Lightroom created during the import process that it should have deleted.

I get a 4 GB warning when backing up my catalog – what is this?

[Here is an article on the 4 GB warning.](#) Be sure Lightroom is up-to-date.

ELIMINATING DUPLICATES

She spoke of two de-duplicate plugins... [teekesselchen](#) and [Jim Keier's](#) and showed us the first... do we assume that's the one that works best?

Both work generally work well at finding duplicates. Only Teekesselchen can make recommendations on which to keep and which to reject (but you should double-check these in any case). I have found that Michael Hoffman (teekesselchen) is quicker to answer questions posted on his site than Jim Keier is to respond to support requests. However, it has been quite a while since I have tried to contact Jim, so perhaps this has changed. Michael's is free; Jim's is free to try on a limited number of photos and then there is a small charge for the unlimited version.

Is there a way to view all the photos marked as rejected before actually confirming the delete?

Yes, you can do a filter (Library filter bar) to just show rejected photos – but keep in mind that this won't show you the other copy of these photos so it might be hard for you to tell at that point whether you really want to reject them or not.

If I delete duplicate photos, will it have other effects such as deleting some keywords that may have been assigned to a duplicate but not originally assigned to the original photos.

Yes it will – the work on one copy is not tied to the other copy. As part of your decision making, evaluate which of your duplicates has this work. You can sync keywords (metadata) and/or editing from one photo to another. (This is outside the scope of this Q&A. In my Fundamentals & Beyond series there is a video on syncing editing – Working on Groups of Photos. The process is the same in the Library module with metadata, and is covered in my Evaluating Photos video.)

I tried to download the Teekesselchen duplicate founder and go “This kind of file can harm your computer. Are you sure you want to proceed?” (or your virus protection software didn’t like it). Why?

According to the plug-in author, this is a false alarm (because the executable file isn’t signed.) If you are not comfortable proceeding, he recommends downloading the zip file from the [Downloads page](#) on his site and installing the plug-in manually according to Zip file instructions on that page.

What causes duplicates?

Many people accidentally import photos twice. While Lightroom will screen out duplicates in the Import dialog, if you rename the files so that you have two copies with different names, Lightroom won’t detect these as duplicates and will import them again.

Sometimes duplicates are different file formats – a raw file and a JPEG, for example. These may have been captured in-camera and both imported, or you may have exported a JPEG and added this exported file back into Lightroom’s catalog.

Next, sometimes people have multiple copies on their hard drive from following instructions from more than one Lightroom instructor on how to name and organize their files, and then they have imported both or all versions.

Finally, sometimes the duplicates were created in another program before a user began to use Lightroom, and then imported.

Why don’t you use a target collection for the duplicates?

The duplicate finder plugin uses a smart collection, which is a rule-based collection (showing all photos that the plugin has assigned the Duplicate keyword.) A smart collection can’t be a target collection. Furthermore, making a collection the target collection makes it possible to add photos to a collection with a shortcut, but in the duplicate identification process we aren’t manually adding photos to the duplicates collection.

Can you search and manage duplicates based on the picture...to identify scanned duplicates?

Not that I’m aware of. Adobe has previewed search capabilities based on image content, but that hasn’t made its way to Lightroom yet and wouldn’t do a comprehensive duplicate search.

MISCELLANEOUS

Any idea of the LR7 release date?

If anyone knows this, they can't say under Adobe's non-disclosure agreement – but I honestly don't know at this point. It's also not clear whether there will be a standalone Lightroom 7, or just a new version of the subscription CC version. (Please, no emails on why the latter would be a mistake!)

Should we use a better cataloging program like Media Pro 1 and reserve Lightroom just for developing the photos?

In my opinion Lightroom is an excellent cataloging program, and one of its strengths is that you can do cataloging, editing, and output creation in one program.

Is LR 5 or 6 recommended? Over LR4.

It just depends on whether you value the features that were added in [Lightroom 5](#) and [Lightroom 6](#).

I have LR4 on my computer. I want to download 6 but I'm afraid that it will replace 4 and I want to change my HD photos folder to simplify. How do I do that?

[Here is a video tutorial on upgrading](#). You can reorganize your folders before or after upgrading.

Will Lr ever give us an escape when closing by accident?

No – there most likely won't ever be a "I didn't mean to close – please don't do so" option. Adobe has tried to do this at my request, but it turned out to be too complicated.

MY VIDEO TRAINING

What are the links to Laura's video training?

[Lightroom CC/6 and 5: The Fundamentals & Beyond](#)

[Lightroom CC/6 and 5: Producing Great Output](#)

[All versions of my Lightroom training](#)

Can I put the training videos on both my laptop and desktop computers?

You can put them on all your own computers and mobile devices.

Which series should I start with?

Start with my [Lightroom CC/6 and 5: The Fundamentals & Beyond](#)

series – it covers the most critical parts of Lightroom – the Library and Develop modules (as well as Map). It doesn't assume that you have prior experience with Lightroom (but if you do, you'll still get a ton out of the series.)

Once you're confident in Lightroom you can learn to create beautiful output in Lightroom with my [Producing Great Output](#) series.