



Q&A: LRC vs ACR + Bridge

In this lesson, we'll explore the distinct functionalities and advantages of Lightroom Classic, over Adobe Camera Raw and Bridge.

Folder Management and Browsing

Lightroom Classic offers a cleaner and more intuitive way to manage photo folders compared to Bridge.

- **Lightroom's Folder View:** Lightroom only displays folders that contain imported photos. This keeps the folder list concise and relevant to your photography.
- **Bridge's Folder View:** Bridge, conversely, displays your entire hard drive structure, including system folders and other non-photo related directories, leading to clutter.
- **Viewing Multiple Folders:** Lightroom allows you to easily view the contents of multiple folders simultaneously by holding the Shift key and clicking on them.
- **Bridge Limitation:** In Bridge, selecting multiple folders typically just switches the view to the last selected folder, making it difficult to compare contents across different directories.

Collections and Smart Collections

Collections in Lightroom are powerful tools for organizing photos, with Smart Collections offering advanced search capabilities.

- **Smart Collections for Saved Searches:** In Lightroom it's easy to create a Smart Collection to find all images shot at f/2.8. This search is performed instantaneously due to Lightroom's database.
- **Lightroom as a Database:** The underlying reason for Lightroom's speed is its database nature. It records metadata like aperture, shutter speed, and camera details upon import, allowing for instant retrieval and searching.

Advanced Editing Features in Lightroom Classic

Beyond organization, Lightroom Classic offers unique editing features that differentiate it from ACR and Bridge.

History

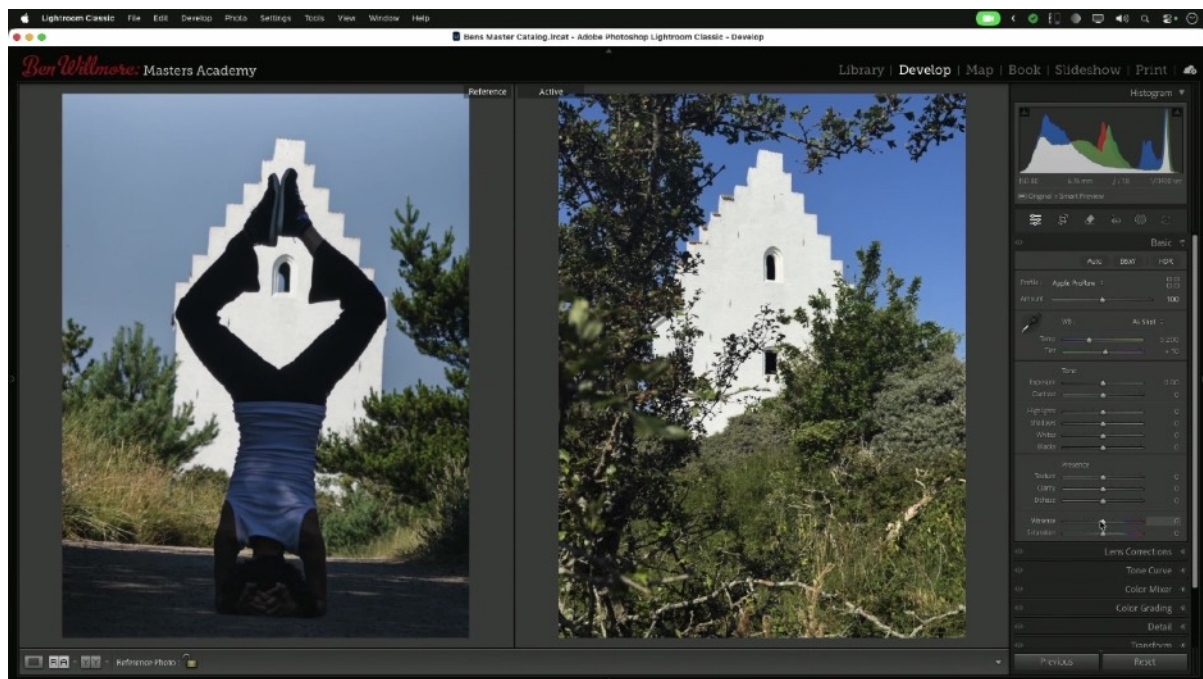
Lightroom's comprehensive history panel and its ability to handle layered files are significant advantages.

- **Full Editing History:** Lightroom maintains a complete history of all edits made to an image, starting from the import stage. This allows you to easily revert to any previous state or experiment freely without fear of losing work.
- **Resetting and Experimentation:** You can reset an image to its default settings and then use it for demonstrations or testing new edits, knowing you can always return to the original state via the history panel.
- **Editing Layered Files:** Lightroom can process and make adjustments to layered files directly in the Develop module, a capability not offered by Adobe Camera Raw.

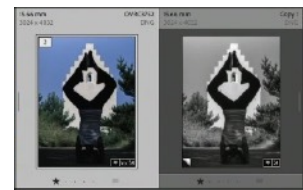
Reference View and Virtual Copies

These features facilitate more controlled and flexible editing workflows.

- **Reference View for Consistency:** The "Set as reference photo" option allows you to view an image alongside the one you're currently editing, which is invaluable for maintaining consistent color and tone, especially when preparing images for books or side-by-side display.



- **Virtual Copies for Variations:** Creating a virtual copy allows you to generate multiple edited versions of a single RAW file without duplicating the original file on your hard drive, saving significant storage space. This is ideal for creating color and black-and-white versions, for instance.
- **Space Efficiency:** Virtual copies consume very little disk space, unlike duplicating original files in ACR or Bridge, which would double the storage requirement for each duplicate.



Editing in Photoshop

When editing in Photoshop, Lightroom offers different options based on your needs.

- **Edit Original vs. Edit a Copy:**
 - "Edit Original" opens the original RAW file, and any adjustments made in Photoshop will be reflected in Lightroom.
 - "Edit a Copy" creates a duplicate of the original file and applies any Lightroom adjustments to that copy before opening it in Photoshop. This is useful if you intend to print or create composites directly from Photoshop with the Lightroom edits applied.
- **Maintaining Lightroom Adjustments:** When editing a layered file in Photoshop, Lightroom adjustments made to that file will not be carried over if you choose "Edit Original." Photoshop will open the raw layered file without Lightroom's edits.



- **Exporting for Composites or Printing:** If you plan to create a composite image in Photoshop or print directly from Photoshop, choosing the option to apply Lightroom's adjustments (e.g., making an image black and white) is crucial.

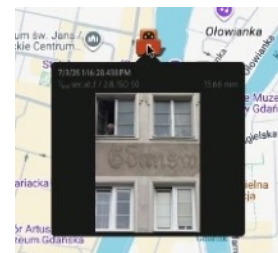
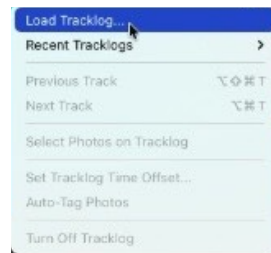
Specialized Modules in Lightroom Classic

Lightroom Classic includes specialized modules that go beyond basic photo editing and management.

Map Module

The Map module visualizes where your photos were taken, making it a powerful tool for geotagging.

- **Visualizing Photo Locations:** You can see all your geotagged photos on a world map.
- **Adding GPS Data:** If a photo lacks GPS information, you can drag and drop it onto the map to assign a location. Alternatively, you can use a GPS track log from a phone to tag photos based on timestamps.
- **Bridge/ACR Limitation:** This integrated mapping functionality is not available in Bridge or Adobe Camera Raw.



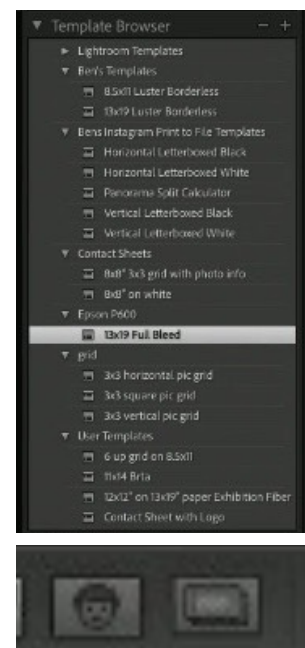
Book, Slideshow, and Print Modules

Lightroom offers modules for creating books, slideshows, and managing printing.

- **Book Module:** Allows for laying out images into book designs.
- **Slideshow Module:** Enables creating simple slideshows with music.
- **Print Module:** Provides a more streamlined printing experience than Photoshop, with customizable templates for consistent print sizes and layouts.

Duplicate Checking and People View

- **Duplicate Checking:** Helps identify and manage duplicate images within your library.
- **People View:** Allows you to tag people in photos, enabling easy searching for all images of a specific individual across your entire library.



Assisted Culling and Keyword Hierarchy

- **Assisted Culling:** This feature helps speed up the process of selecting the best images by automatically checking for sharpness, open eyes in portraits, and other quality indicators.
- **Keyword Hierarchy:** You can create hierarchical keywords (e.g., San Francisco as a child of California, which is a child of the United States). Tagging an image with a specific keyword makes it searchable by all its parent keywords.

Plugins and Color Label Customization

- **Plugin Support:** Lightroom's functionality can be extended with plugins, including natural language search capabilities.
- **Customizable Color Labels:** You can define the meaning of color labels for folders, collections, and images, which can be customized through the Metadata menu. This provides a more structured way to categorize and manage your assets.

When to Use Bridge and Adobe Camera Raw

While Lightroom Classic offers numerous advantages, Bridge and ACR still have their places in a photographer's workflow.

Bridge for External or Fleeting Images

- **Managing Non-Cataloged Images:** Bridge is useful for working with images that are not part of your main Lightroom catalog, such as images downloaded from eBay or photos provided by others for editing.
- **Fleeting Images:** ACR is recommended for images that are not intended for long-term storage or repeated editing, like photos of a car being sold, where quick adjustments and immediate use are key.

ACR for Quick Edits

- **Non-Lightroom Images:** ACR is suitable for editing images that you don't plan to import into Lightroom or for quick, one-off edits where you don't need the full cataloging features.

Avoiding Workflow Conflicts

- **Single Source of Truth:** If an image is imported into Lightroom Classic, all subsequent management actions (renaming, moving, editing) should be initiated from within Lightroom to prevent lost edits.

Safely Exiting Lightroom Classic

- **Saving Metadata:** If you decide to stop using Lightroom Classic and revert to Bridge and ACR, it's crucial to save all your Lightroom adjustments to the files before quitting.
 - a. In Lightroom, navigate to "Catalog" and select "All Photographs."
 - b. Select all photographs using "Edit" > "Select All."
 - c. Go to the "Metadata" menu and choose "Save Metadata to Files."
 - d. Once the process is complete, quit Lightroom.
- **Purpose of Saving Metadata:** This process embeds Lightroom's develop settings into the image files, making them compatible with Adobe Camera Raw and Bridge, ensuring your edits are preserved.