

Adobe® Lightroom™ beta

Questions & Answers

Answers to your questions about Project Lightroom

Q: What is Project Lightroom?

A: Adobe Lightroom Beta is a new, exciting image handler built from the ground up for professional photographers. It is an efficient, powerful way to import, select, develop and showcase large volumes of digital images. It allows you to spend less time sorting and organizing images, so you have more time to actually shoot and perfect them.

Q: Why Lightroom Beta?

A: To put it simply, Adobe Lightroom is unfinished. And before we finish it, we want input from the people who are going to rely on it. We want to make it available to you now, so you can tell us what you like, what you'd like better—so you can help us shape it into as close to the perfect photographer's application as we can possibly get.

Q: What is Adobe Labs?

A: Labs was originally developed as the public home of work-in-progress at Macromedia. Now that Macromedia is part of Adobe, it has been retitled Adobe Labs, and will be the source for early looks at emerging products and technologies from Adobe, including Project Lightroom. Here you can not only gain early access to downloads, samples, documentation, release notes, tutorials and more. You can also ask questions, discuss, and share your feedback with Adobe.

Q: Who will use Lightroom Beta?

A: First and foremost, Lightroom is the product professional photographers have been demanding, especially those who deal with large volumes of digital images. These include fashion and portrait photographers, photojournalists, wedding, landscape and commercial photographers. To these add the seasoned personal photographers who aspire to achieving the same results as the pros, and who demand the same level of quality in their tools.

Q: Does Lightroom Beta replace Adobe Bridge or Camera Raw?

A: For some, it might. In truth it will depend on what you do and how you like to do it. Having an interface that is 100% tuned to the photography workflow, plus the unique features that will be in Lightroom, will mean some people will use Lightroom in place of Bridge. On the other hand, some photographers will need or want the broad image capabilities of Adobe Bridge—such as integration with Adobe Creative Suite 2, previewing PDF, InDesign® and Illustrator® documents, and workgroup management tools. Some or all of the time, these people will continue to use Adobe Bridge.

Q: How does Lightroom Beta differ from Adobe Photoshop CS2?

A: Adobe Photoshop CS2 is, and will continue to be, the industry standard in digital image editing. Photoshop will always hold an important place in the pro photographer's toolbox, for detailed image editing and compositing. However, photographers face a variety of workflow concerns beyond image editing. The Adobe Bridge and Camera Raw components of Photoshop CS2 began solving these problems in recent years. Now, Lightroom takes these concepts further, in a very photographer-centric way. Lightroom is also different from Photoshop in terms of its software architecture. Developers and customers have long appreciated the ability to extend Photoshop functionality through third-party plug-ins that are confined within dialogs, and that can't always access all of the information in an image. In contrast, Lightroom has been designed from the ground up with a fully modular architecture. All of the tasks you see in Lightroom's main interface—Library, Develop, Slideshow, and Print—are actually independent modules that have full control over your images, and which can use the entire screen to show you just the tools you need for the task at hand. In the future, Adobe will be releasing a developer SDK for Lightroom, so that third parties can create additional modules that extend the application and the workflow in groundbreaking ways.

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Q: Will Lightroom Beta be compatible with Photoshop CS2 and Photoshop Elements?

A: Yes. Images handled by Adobe Lightroom will be editable in Photoshop CS2 or Photoshop Elements. Some non-photography file formats usable in Photoshop and Photoshop Elements will not be supported by Lightroom, but this is in keeping with the mandate of Lightroom as a photographer's application. Lightroom does provide a somewhat different approach to image adjustments than Photoshop, however, and this initial beta release is somewhat experimental. Thus, users should expect the integration between Photoshop and Lightroom to evolve over time.

Q: Is Lightroom Beta an image editing tool or a workflow productivity tool?

A: The concept behind Lightroom is to provide a single environment that has all of the functions photographers most commonly need to perform on their images. It's not about having every tool in the hardware store. It's about having a focused set of features that are just right for photography, are intuitive, powerful, and easy to learn. So yes, it's an image editing tool, *and* it's a workflow productivity tool.

Q: Are there any training materials available?

A: One of the goals of Project Lightroom is to create an application that is so easy to use, you may never even look at the user manual. A basic tenet of the product team is that a new user should be able to get up and running easily after learning no more than five basic rules about a new application. Thus, Lightroom displays its five rules prominently when the application is first launched. Basic information about using Lightroom is contained in the Release Notes available with the product download at Adobe Labs (<http://labs.adobe.com/technologies/lightroom>). There is also a discussion forum accessible via links on the same web page. We encourage you to ask questions and talk about your experiences with Lightroom, as Lightroom product team members will be participating as well.

Q: How can I download a copy of Lightroom Beta?

A: Simply visit Adobe Labs at (<http://labs.adobe.com/technologies/lightroom>) to download a copy of the Adobe Lightroom beta. You can choose to download only a copy of the Lightroom application, or the application along with some sample content to get you started.

Q: When will Lightroom ship?

A: Our current intention is to ship a 1.0 version of Lightroom before the end of 2006, but that date could shift based on user input during the public beta.

Q: How will vendors create modules of their own? What kind of third-party support will Adobe offer?

A: Because Adobe Lightroom is being built using an entirely new open modular architecture, third-party vendors will ultimately be able to develop valuable enhancements and custom workflows. Once the final product is released, an SDK for this purpose can be made available.

Q: What are the system requirements?

A: Adobe Lightroom Beta requires Mac OS® X version 10.4.3 (Tiger) or higher, a 1GHz or faster PowerPC G4 or G5 processor (including iBook G4 or PowerBook G4), and 768 MB of RAM (although more is recommended), and 1 GB or more of free hard drive space.

Q: What about a Windows version?

A: A Windows version of Lightroom is already under development, but is not yet ready for its public debut. The final, packaged versions for both platforms should be released within a few months of each other. As Microsoft is gearing up for a major operating system transition, and since Lightroom is a brand new product from Adobe, we are spending extra time on the Windows side to investigate the best design approaches that will support our Windows customers today, while also building for the future.

Q: What file formats will Lightroom support?

A: Over 100 native camera raw file formats, DNG, TIFF and JPEG—in other words, the formats primarily used in digital cameras. A complete list of manufacturers and models supported in Camera Raw can be found at <http://www.adobe.com/products/photoshop/cameraraw.html>.

Q: Why is Lightroom unable to read the white balance settings for my Nikon D50, D2X or D2Hs cameras?

A: These three Nikon camera models have encrypted white balance settings that cannot be read without additional support from Nikon. Adobe Systems and Nikon worked together to provide support for those cameras in Adobe Camera Raw, but Lightroom is a tool designed on the latest available coding platform, and we are again working with Nikon now to provide a solution that works with our new platform.

Q: Why don't my Camera Raw images look the same in Photoshop and Lightroom?

A: Although Lightroom leverages much of the core Adobe Camera Raw technology, we've disconnected compatibility for the moment to provide the most flexible environment possible.

Q: Will Lightroom be available in languages other than English?

A: The final version of Adobe Lightroom will initially be available in English, French, German and Japanese.

Q: How do "Shoots" and "Collections" differ?

A: A single photo belongs to only one Shoot, but it can be in as many Collections as you choose. The Shoot is created when you import photos to Lightroom—it's the digital film roll. If you want to organize a photo in different ways, you can place it in more than one Collection afterward.

Q: When will the beta version of Adobe Lightroom expire?

A: The first release of Adobe Lightroom Beta will expire in June, 2006. However, additional beta versions with appropriate expiration dates will be released throughout the life of the project, so that photographers who have come to rely on the beta version will not have an interruption in their ability to use Lightroom.

Q: How do I make the panels at the left and right side appear again?

A: Just run your mouse to the left or right side to make the relevant panel appear temporarily. If you want them to stay open, press the Tab key on your keyboard—and press it again to make them disappear.

Q: I thought "beta" meant "feature complete." Is Lightroom complete?

A: Terms change. Lightroom is not final software, which makes it a beta to us. But no, it's not feature complete—we will finalize the feature set based on the input we receive from you, the people who use it first.

Q: Will Lightroom run on Intel-based Macintoshes?

A: Lightroom Beta requires a PowerPC-based Macintosh, as the Intel-based Macs are not available yet. The final shipping version of Adobe Lightroom will run on both PowerPC and Intel-based Macs.