

# THE NEW IMPORT DIALOG

**Extract from *Adobe Photoshop Lightroom CC/6 - The Missing FAQ*  
for Lightroom CC 2015.2 and Lightroom 6.2 and later**

As the new Import dialog looks nothing like the old one, I've rewritten the Import chapter of my book, *Adobe Photoshop Lightroom CC/6 - The Missing FAQ*.

Since so many people are trying to figure out the new Import dialog, I've decided to help by making my new Import chapter available for ALL of my newsletter subscribers for a limited time. To subscribe to the newsletter and access the free downloads, visit <http://www.lightroomqueen.com/quickstart/>

The full book is available for purchase from <http://www.lightroomqueen.com/> or from online bookstores such as Amazon and B&N.

VICTORIA BAMPTON

## APPENDIX C - THE NEW IMPORT DIALOG

As Lightroom is built around a database, the first thing you need to do is add the information about your photos and videos to this database. This process is called Importing, but don't let that confuse you. Although it's called Importing, the photos don't go 'into' Lightroom. A better word to describe the process might be reference, link, or register.

Importing the photos simply means that the metadata about the photos and videos is added to the database as text records, along with a link to that file on the hard drive and a small JPEG preview. It's like an index of the books in a library. (Figure 25.1) The library catalog tells you a little about the book and which shelf it's stored on, and maybe even gives you a preview of the cover, but it doesn't contain the book itself.

While you're importing the photos, Lightroom can copy the photos to a new location of your choice, but that's not required—if the photos



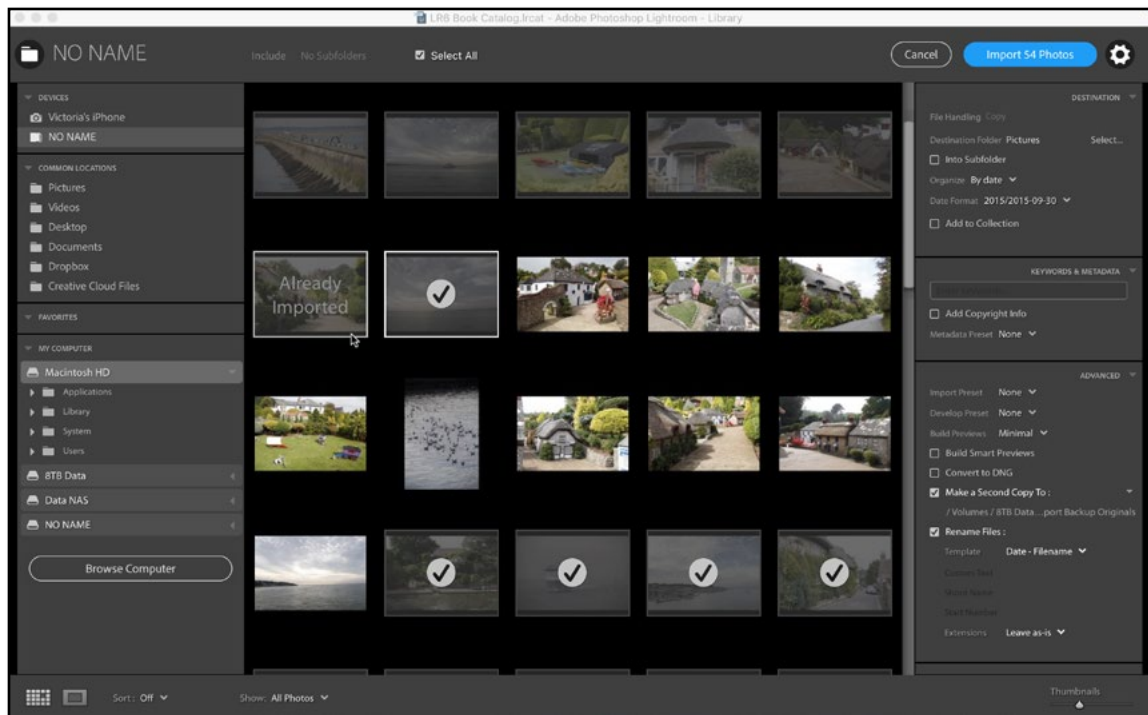
▲ **Figure 25.1** Like a manual library card catalog, Lightroom keeps track of where your photos and videos are stored, and information about them, but it doesn't contain the photos/videos themselves.

### WHAT IS METADATA?

Metadata is often defined as 'data describing data'.

As far as photos are concerned, metadata describes how the photo was taken (camera, shutter speed, aperture, lens, etc.), who took the photo (copyright) and descriptive data about the content of the photo (keywords, caption).

Lightroom also stores all of your Develop edits as metadata, which means that it records your changes as a set of text instructions (i.e. Exposure +0.33, Highlights -30, Shadows +25, etc.) instead of applying them directly to the image data. This means you can edit the photo again later without degrading the image quality.



▲ **Figure 25.2** Photos are added to Lightroom's catalog using the Import dialog.

## IMPORT FROM OTHER PROGRAMS

As a keen photographer, you likely already have a large number of photos stored on your hard drive. These older photos can also be imported into your Lightroom catalog, either at their current location or while copying them to a new location.

If your photos are already cataloged using other software, for example, Photoshop Elements, Aperture or iPhoto, read Appendix A [starting on page A-28](#) before continuing.

are already safely on your hard drive, Lightroom can reference them at their existing location instead.

Don't worry, importing photos into Lightroom doesn't mean you're locked in to using Lightroom forever. Your photos remain accessible to other software, most of the metadata can be written to the file in a standardized format that other software can understand (excluding Develop settings), and you can export the edited photos to standard image formats. You're in control.

The Import dialog has two parts—an initial Add Photos screen and the main dialog. (**Figure 25.2**) There are three main decisions to make: where to find the photos (the source), how to handle the photos (copy/add) and if you're copying the photos, where to put them (destination). The rest of the options are, well, optional!

First, we'll step through the basics of getting your photos into Lightroom, and then we'll go back through the individual elements of the Import dialog in more detail. Although we'll mainly refer to importing photos throughout the chapter, the instructions apply to videos too. Let's get started...



## Importing Your Photos

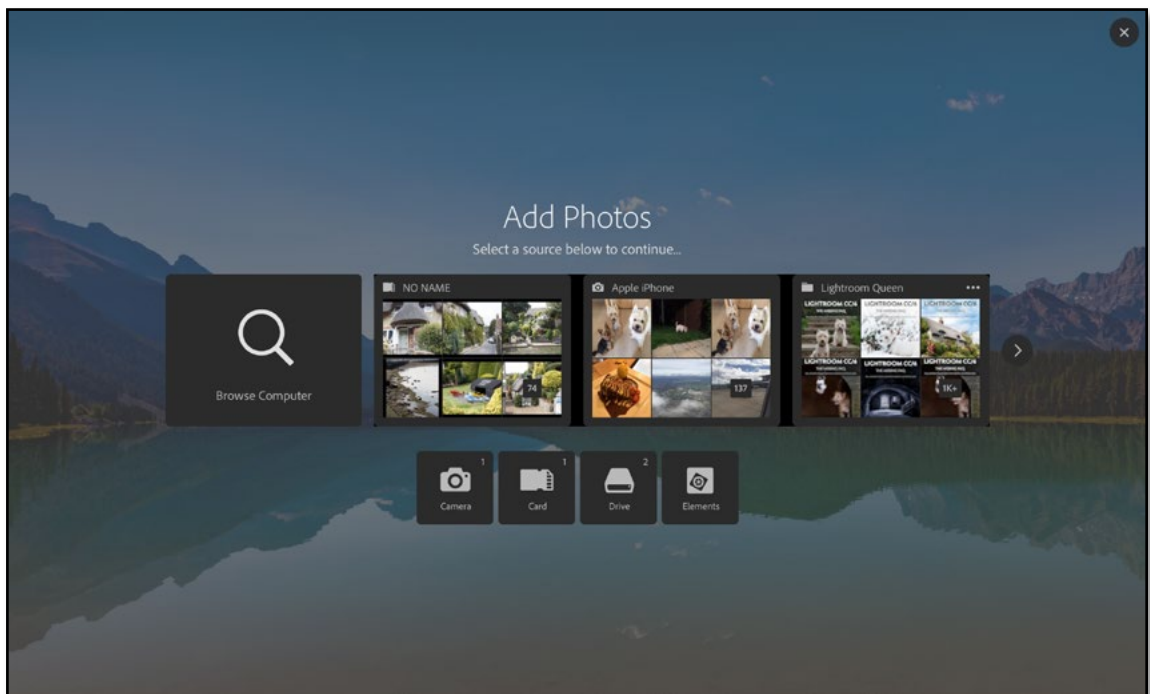
1. Open the Import dialog by going to *File menu > Import Photos and Videos* or by pressing the **Import** button in the lower left corner of the Library module.
2. If you're importing from a memory card, insert your memory card into the card reader or attach the camera to the computer. Card readers usually work more reliably with Lightroom than USB camera connections.
3. In the Add Photos screen, select the source of the photos. **(Figure 25.3)**

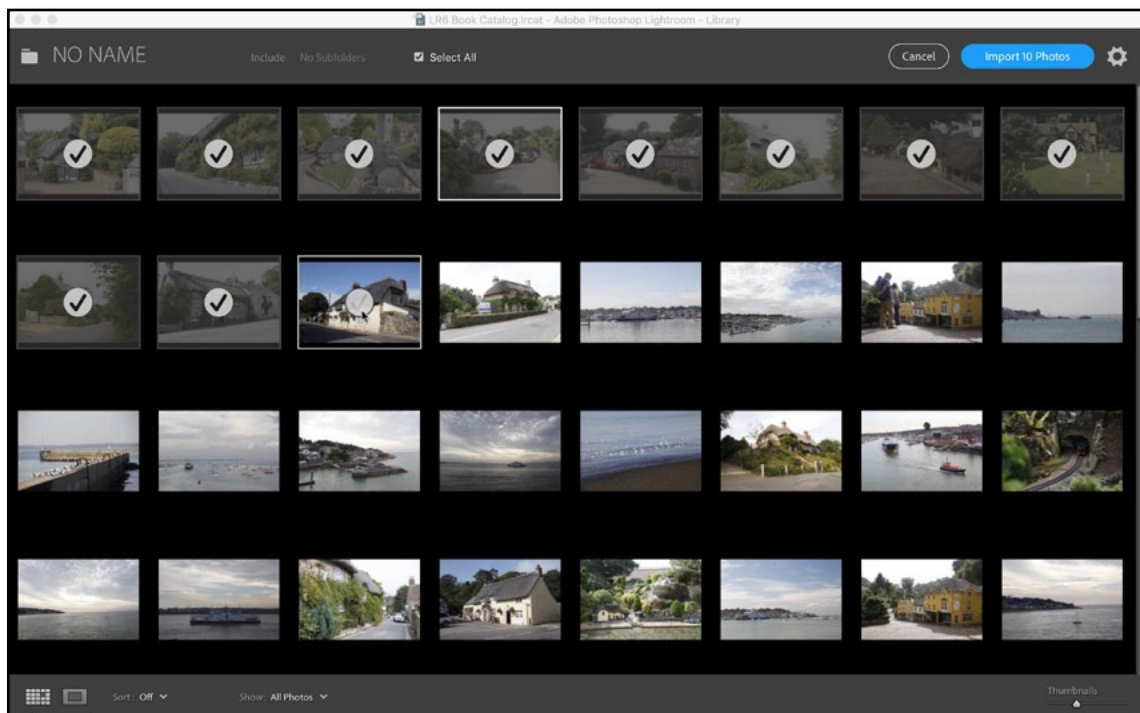
The *Browse Computer* button allows you to navigate to any folder on your computer using your operating system dialog, or you can click on one of the pods or beacons.

The top row (pods), with arrows at either end, contains likely sources of photos that haven't been imported yet, such as memory cards, mobile devices and some folders of photos found on your computer.

The bottom row (beacons) contains shortcuts to connected

▼ **Figure 25.3** Select the memory card or folder of photos using the Add Photos screen.





▲ **Figure 25.4** The main Import dialog has the left and right side panels hidden by default. Click in the top left corner to show the Source panels and on the gear icon to display the Import Settings panels.

- cameras and mobile devices, memory cards, other drives and if it's installed, Photoshop Elements.
4. The main Import dialog opens, ready for you to select specific photos. By default, the side panels are hidden, as shown in **Figure 25.4**.
5. Thumbnails start to appear in the preview area. They make take a while to appear if you have thousands of photos, but you don't need to wait for them to finish appearing before continuing. It's possible to view and check/uncheck photos in the Import dialog, but it's easier to import them all and sort through them in the Library module after import.
6. If you've selected a folder that has subfolders, such as your Pictures or Photos folder, click the *Include Subfolders* pop-up at the top of the window to check or uncheck specific subfolders.
7. Click the gear icon in the top right corner to display the import settings. (**Figure 25.5**) It's important to understand where your photos will be stored, even if you don't change the other settings.
8. At the top of the Destination panel, decide on your **File Handling** setting.

If you're importing from a hard drive, you have a choice:

- To leave the photos in their existing location, select **Add**, then skip to step 11. This is a good choice if your photos are already arranged in a tidy folder structure that you'd like to keep.
- To create a copy in the location of your choice, for example, another hard drive, select **Copy**. You'll need twice as much hard drive space if you choose this option, as you'll be duplicating all of your photos, but it leaves your current system intact.

If you're importing from a memory card or camera/mobile device, *Copy* is automatically selected.

- If you've chosen *Copy*, you need to choose where to store the photos. This is called the **Destination Folder**. By default, Lightroom copies your photos into the Pictures folder in your user account, but you may choose to store them on another hard drive by clicking the **Select** button.
- Then you need to decide how you're going to organize the photos. The other options in the Destination panel allow you to set the folder structure.

To copy the photos directly into the folder you've selected, select *Into One Folder* in the **Organize** pop-up.

To create a subfolder for the photos, check **Into Subfolder**, enter the name of the new subfolder, and select *Into One Folder* in the *Organize* pop-up. This is useful when copying photos from a memory card into a manually-created folder structure.

To create a date-based folder structure automatically, select *By Date* from the *Organize* pop-up and a folder structure from the **Date Format** pop-up. If you're not sure which to select, the YYYY/YYYY-MM/YYYY-MM-DD option is a good default. We'll go into more detail in the Destination panel section [starting on page C-30](#).

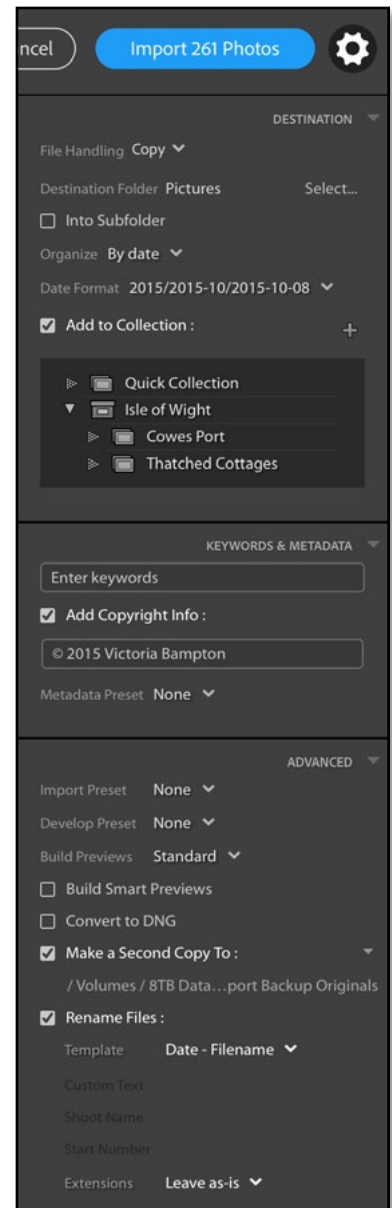
- The rest of the settings in the dialog could remain at their defaults, however for your initial imports, I'd recommend the following settings. We'll go into more detail later in the chapter.

In the Destination panel:

- **Add to Collection**—unchecked.

In the Keywords & Metadata panel:

- **Enter keywords** field—leave it blank.
- **Add Copyright Info**—enter your copyright information, for example, © 2015 Victoria Bampton.
- **Metadata**—None or turn to [page C-23](#) to learn how to create a more detailed metadata preset.



▲ **Figure 25.5** The Import Settings panels display on the right of the dialog..

## EJECT AFTER IMPORT

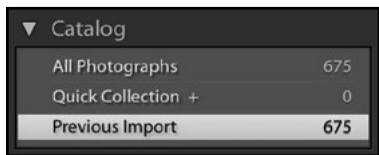
Don't forget to safely eject the memory card (or device) using the operating system before removing the card, as the new Import dialog no longer does this automatically.

In the Advanced panel:

- **Import Preset**—None.
- **Develop Preset**—None.
- **Build Previews**—Standard. If you're importing thousands of photos, select *Embedded & Sidecar* instead. It's quicker initially but stores lower quality previews.
- **Build Smart Previews**—unchecked.
- **Convert to DNG**—unchecked.
- **Make a Second Copy**—If you're importing existing photos, leave it unchecked. If you're importing from a memory card, check it then click on the file path and choose a location on another hard drive as a temporary backup.
- **Rename Photos**—unchecked or turn to the Advanced panel section [starting on page C-26](#) to learn how to rename your photos.

12. Finally, press **Import X Photos** in the top right corner.

13. The Import dialog closes and the new photos start to appear in the Library module. The photos are grouped in a special collection in the Catalog panel called *Current Import* (which then changes to *Previous Import*) (**Figure 25.6**), and their folders also appear in the Folders panel.



▲ **Figure 25.6** The photos are grouped in a special collection called *Previous Import*.



CONTINUES ON  
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Congratulations, your photos are now cataloged by Lightroom! If you're itching to start using Lightroom, you can now skip on to backing up your photos ([page 61](#)) and then viewing them in Lightroom ([page 85](#)), and come back to the rest of this chapter later. If you're still with me, let's go back and explore the individual elements of the Import dialog in more detail.

## IMPORT IN DETAIL

In Lightroom, there are usually multiple ways to accomplish the same task. For example, to open the Import dialog you can go to *File menu > Import Photos*, press the *Import* button at the bottom of the left panel group in the Library module, drag photos from Explorer (Windows) / Finder (Mac) onto Lightroom's Grid view, or use the keyboard shortcut Ctrl-Shift-I (Windows) / Cmd-Shift-I (Mac). (The keyboard shortcuts are listed in sidebar boxes throughout the book.) Lightroom can also open the Import dialog automatically when you insert a memory card.

The same holds true for choosing the source of the photos. You can

## AUTOMATICALLY OPENING THE IMPORT DIALOG

There are two different behaviors involved in the Import dialog opening automatically: whether Lightroom opens the Import dialog when the program is already open, and whether the program launches by itself even though it was closed.

To change this auto-open behavior, go to Lightroom's *Preferences dialog* > *General tab* and check or uncheck **Show Import dialog when a memory card is detected**. (Figure 25.8)

On Windows, this checkbox controls whether the Import dialog opens automatically when a card is detected, and also whether the program launches from closed (using Windows Auto Play).

On a Mac, the checkbox only controls whether Lightroom opens the Import dialog when the program is already open. To set Lightroom to launch from closed, insert the memory card or plug in the device. Go to the Applications folder, open the Image Capture app, and select the memory card or device on the left-hand side. In the lower left corner, click the arrow, and select Lightroom as the program to automatically open when that device is detected. (Figure 25.9)

The same logic applies, not just to card readers and cameras, but also to mobile phones and tablets, USB keys, printers with card readers, and various other devices.



◀ **Figure 25.8** The *Show import dialog when a memory card is detected* checkbox in the *Preferences dialog* > *General tab* controls whether the Import dialog automatically opens when a device is connected. On Windows, it also launches Lightroom if it's closed.

either use the Add Photos screen or the Source panels on the left of the main Import dialog—or you can use both.

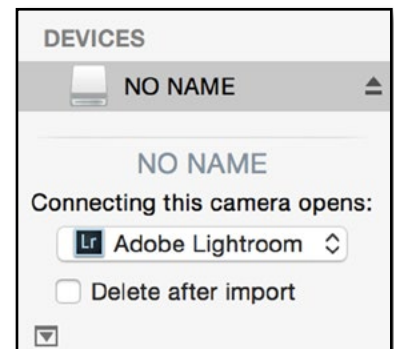
## ADD PHOTOS SCREEN

The Add Photos screen is the first screen you see when opening the Import dialog, and it offers a number of different ways of selecting the source of the photos. (Figure 25.10)

You can drag and drop photos from Explorer (Windows) or Finder (Mac) onto the Add Photos screen, and they'll automatically be selected in the next window.

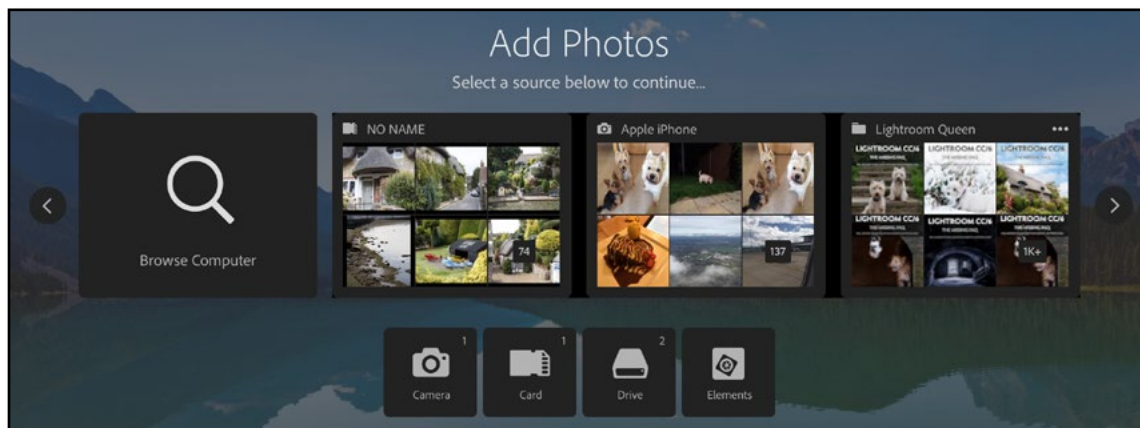
You can also click the **Browse Computer** button to open the standard operating system dialog, where you can select individual photos or entire folders

To the right of the *Browse Computer* button are up to 20 'pods'. These are typical photo sources including cameras, memory cards, mobile devices (e.g. phones/tablets), folders you've marked as favorites,

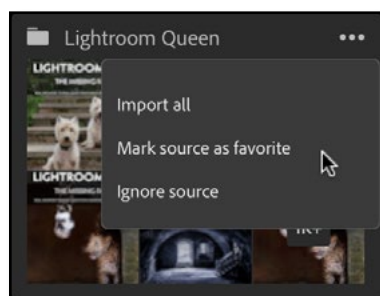


▲ **Figure 25.9** On Mac OS X, Image Capture controls which program launches when you insert a memory card or attach a device.





▲ **Figure 25.10** The Add Photos screen makes it easy to select the source of your photos. The first row of icons are pods, and the second row are called beacons.



▲ **Figure 25.11** Click on the three dots to display the pod menu.

## HIDE ADD PHOTOS

If you're an advanced user, you may prefer to skip the initial Add Photos screen and go straight to the main Import dialog. To do so, go to *Preferences dialog > General tab* and uncheck **Show "Add Photos" screen**.

recent import folders, the standard user account Pictures, Videos and Desktop folders, and other popular storage locations on your computer such as Dropbox, GoogleDrive and iCloud Drive folders. Click the arrows to the left and right to scroll through the pods.

The pods only appear if they include photos that haven't been imported, for example, your memory card won't show if you've already imported the photos. If you float your cursor over the pod, the entire folder path shows as a tooltip.

If you click on the three-dots in the top right corner of a pod (**Figure 25.11**), there are additional options:

- **Import all** imports all of the photos immediately, skipping the main dialog and import settings.
- **Mark source as favorite** ensures that the folder always appears as a pod if it contains new photos. This is useful if you regularly import from the same folders.
- **Ignore source** hides the pod. Be careful, as there isn't currently a way to 'unignore' a folder.

Beneath the pod are 'beacons'. The first beacon is for cameras including mobile devices, then memory cards, then other hard drives, and finally other import sources such as Photoshop Elements (if it's installed). Like the pods, these are simply shortcuts to specific sources.

Clicking on any of these sources, whether the *Browse Computer* button, pods, beacons or just dragging and dropping displays the selected photos in the main Import dialog. We'll come back to selecting the individual photos shortly, but first, let's investigate the Source panels.

## SOURCE PANELS

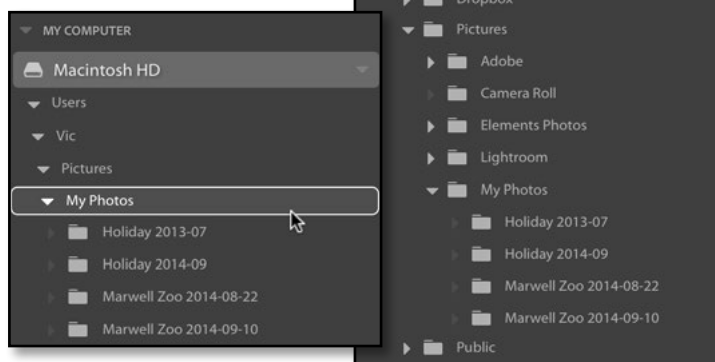
The Source panels are found in the main Import dialog, to the left of the photo thumbnails, but they're hidden by default. They can be used after the Add Photos screen to fine tune the folder selection, or used in place of that initial Add Photos screen. (These panels are similar to the old Source panel, so they may feel more comfortable for existing Lightroom users.) To display the Source panels, click in the top left corner of the main Import dialog. (**Figure 25.12**)

At the top of the Source panels are your devices—cameras, card readers, mobile devices, and so forth—then common photo locations, then any folders you've marked as favorites using the Add Photos screen and finally, the hard drives attached to your computer, including any mounted network drives. To select a source, simply click on the folder or device of your choice. The photos contained within the selected folder display in the thumbnail preview area.

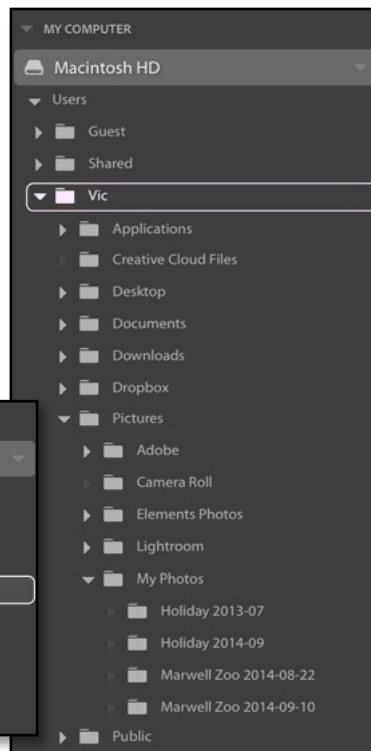
### Why do the folders keep jumping around when I click on them?

When you click on different folders in the My Computer panel, it can appear to have a mind of its own, with different behavior depending on whether you single-click or double-click, but it's actually a useful feature.

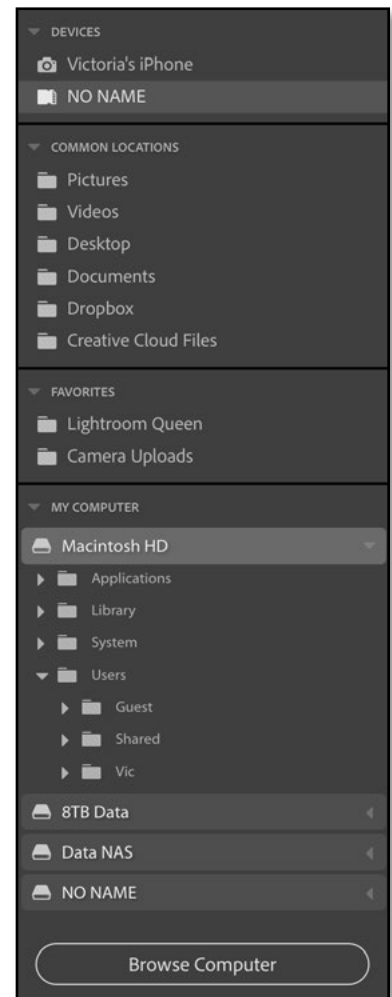
If you navigate around by



▲ **Figure 25.13** With the My Photos folder docked, the parent folders are hidden.



▲ **Figure 25.14** When the folders list is undocked, the folder list can become very long and folder names can be clipped.



▲ **Figure 25.12** The Source panels on the left of the Import dialog allow you to select the folder or device to import.

## FAVORITES

In the Source panel is a section marked **Favorites**. The only way to mark a folder as a favorite folder is using the three-dots menu in the Add Photos screen. If your chosen folder doesn't show up in the Add Photos pods, importing a single photo from that folder (even if you then delete it) will make it available as a pod.

single-clicking on the folder arrows or folder names, the navigation behaves normally. If you double-click, or if you right-click and choose **Dock Folder** from the context-sensitive menu, you can collapse the folder hierarchy to hide unnecessary folders. (Figure 25.13) This makes it easier to navigate through a complex folder hierarchy, especially if it's many levels deep and the panel is too narrow to read the folder names. If you collapse it down too far, just double-click on the parent folder to show the full hierarchy again. (Figure 25.14)

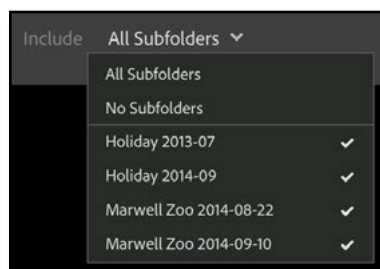
## How do I import from multiple folders or memory cards in one go?

If all the photos you want to import are in subfolders under a single parent folder, for example, within a Photos folder, then you can select that parent folder using the Add Photos screen or the Source panels, and select **Include > All Subfolders** at the top of the screen. (Figure 25.15) All the photos from the subfolders display in the preview area, ready to be imported.

If your photos are spread around multiple folders, it's easiest to select them in the My Computer panel. Hold down Ctrl (Windows) / Cmd (Mac) while clicking on each folder. If the folders are consecutive, hold down Shift while clicking on the first and last folder in a series to select them without having to click on each one.

Multiple selections are limited to folders shown in the My Computer panel. You can't import from two separate devices in one go (e.g. two card cards) by selecting them in the Devices panel. However if the operating system sees the memory cards as two drives in the My Computer panel, you can Ctrl-click (Windows) / Cmd-click (Mac) on the folders to import both at once.

If you have thousands of photos to import, it can help to break the import into smaller chunks, for example, 10,000 at a time



▲ **Figure 25.15** You can choose to include or exclude subfolders using the menu at the top of the screen.

## PREVIEWING AND SELECTING INDIVIDUAL PHOTOS

Having selected the source of the photos, the photo thumbnails start to populate the central preview area. In this grid, you can view the photos and select the ones you want to import. When you float over a thumbnail, you can view the filename and other metadata in a tooltip. (Figure 25.16)

The Import button in the top right corner reminds you how many photos are checked for import.

### How do I select only certain photos to import?

The circular checkbox in the center of the thumbnail controls whether the photo is included in the import. They're all checked by default. The **Select All** checkbox above the grid checks/unchecks all the photos in one go, or you can click the individual checkboxes to select or deselect specific photos.

To check or uncheck a series of photos, hold down Ctrl (Windows) / Cmd (Mac) while clicking on photos to select non-consecutive photos, or Shift-click on the first and last photo to select a group of consecutive photos. Once you have the photos selected, shown by a white border, check or uncheck the checkbox on a single photo to apply that same checkmark setting to all of the selected photos.

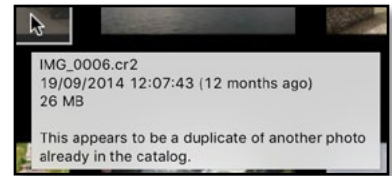
While it's possible to preview and select specific photos at the Import stage, it's not the best place for that task. If you accidentally close the Import dialog before completing the import, you can lose all the work you've done selecting files, whereas marking photos in the Library module saves as you go along, and offers a 1:1 zoom to allow you to check focus.

### Why are some photos unavailable or dimmed in the Import dialog?

You might notice that some of the photos appear dimmed in the Grid. Dimmed photos with a checkmark are selected for import. Photos shown in full color are unchecked photos, but they can be selected for import by toggling the checkbox. (Figure 25.17)

Dimmed photos that don't have a checkbox are unavailable for import because they're recognized as duplicates of photos already in your current Lightroom catalog. When you float over these photos, the overlay says *Already Imported*.

To be classed as a suspected duplicate, the files must match on the



▲ **Figure 25.16** Float over the thumbnail to view the filename and other metadata.



▲ **Figure 25.17** Dimmed thumbnails with a checkbox will be imported. Full color photos are not selected for import. Dimmed thumbnails without a checkbox are duplicates of photos in the catalog.



## IMPORTING DUPLICATES

If, for some reason, you need to import duplicate photos into your catalog (and I should note that's almost always a bad idea), you can import them into a new catalog and then use *File menu > Import from Another Catalog* to merge the records into your main catalog, or you can rename the photos outside of Lightroom before trying to import them.

original filename (as it was when imported into Lightroom), the EXIF capture date and time, and the file length (size).

## How do I change the preview size?

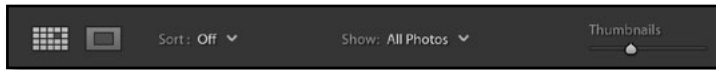
In the bottom right corner of the Import dialog, the **Thumbnails** slider adjusts the size of the thumbnails. The thumbnails embedded in the files are usually small and low quality, but there's also a larger JPEG preview embedded in most photos. These larger previews aren't used for the Grid view as they're slower to load, but the Loupe view allows you to take advantage of the larger preview. (**Figure 25.18**)

To show the larger Loupe view of a photo, select any thumbnail and press the Loupe button in the bottom left corner of the Import dialog or double-click on the thumbnail. (If it doesn't work, the file may not include a larger preview, or Lightroom may be having trouble reading it, so go ahead and import the photos and view them in the Library module instead).

Below that Loupe preview is the checkbox to include or exclude the photo from the Import. Press the Grid button or double-click on the photo to return to Grid view again.

► **Figure 25.18** The Loupe view allows you to see a larger preview of the photo before importing.





**Figure 25.19** Along the bottom of the Import dialog, you'll find the Grid/Loupe buttons, Sort order pop-up, thumbnail filter pop-up and thumbnail size slider.

## Can I change the sort order?

Also at the bottom of the screen is the **Sort** pop-up (Figure 25.19), which allows you to sort the thumbnails in the Grid.

The options are:

- **Capture Time** sorts the photos based on their capture time. This is usually the best choice.
- **Checked State** displays the checked photos first, followed by the unchecked photos.
- **Filename** sorts the photos in alpha-numeric filename order.
- **Media Type** displays the videos first, followed by the photos.
- **Off** disables sorting.

## Can I filter the photos?

As well as changing the sort order, you can filter the photos shown in the Grid using the **Show** pop-up at the bottom of the screen.

- **All Photos**—displays all the photos in the selected source.
- **New Photos**—hides any photos that have already been imported and are recognized as duplicates.

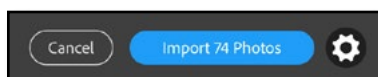
### IMPORT SHORTCUTS

Open Import dialog	Ctrl-Shift-I / Cmd-Shift-I
Grid view	G
Loupe view	E
Move between photos	Left/right arrows
Zoom	Spacebar
Check selected photo	P
Uncheck selected photo	U or X
Toggle checkbox	`
Auto Advance	Caps Lock
Begin Import	Enter
Cancel / Close Dialog	Escape

### SELECTING SPECIFIC FILE TYPES

You can't filter for specific file types, for example, just the raw files, using Lightroom's Import dialog. One solution is to import all the photos into Lightroom and then filter them using the Library module's Filter bar and remove specific photos. We'll come back to that in the Finding & Filtering Photos chapter [starting on page 179](#).

Alternatively, you can make use of your operating system's sort by file type in Explorer (Windows) / Finder (Mac). Select the files you want to import and drag and drop them onto Lightroom's icon in the Dock (Mac only), or directly on the Grid view in the Library module or Add Photos screen (Windows or Mac). The main Import dialog opens with these specific photos already selected, ready for import.



▲ **Figure 25.20** To view or change the import settings, click the gear icon in the top right corner.

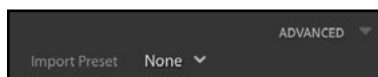
## IMPORT SETTINGS

When you're importing your photos, it's important to check the settings, especially where the photos will be stored. To access the import settings, click the gear icon in the top right corner. (Figure 25.20)

In the Fast Track section, there were some recommended settings to help you get started, but now let's investigate each of the settings in turn, so you can make an informed decision.

### How do I create Import presets, and what do they include?

Having made these decisions the first time, you can save them to reuse again later. Lightroom remembers your last used settings, but you might need different settings for different uses. For example, you may use different settings when copying from a memory card than you do when importing existing photos. You can save these sets of settings as Import presets.



▲ **Figure 25.21** You can save sets of import settings using the *Import Preset* pop-up.

The **Import Preset** pop-up is found at the top of the Advanced panel. (Figure 25.21) Select your import settings and then choose *Save Current Setting as New Preset* from the pop-up menu and give it a name.

All of the settings in the right-hand panels are included in the presets. Source panel selections and checked/unchecked thumbnails aren't included in the preset, as these change each time you import.

To use these settings again later, simply select the preset from the *Import Preset* pop-up. You can also update or delete existing presets by selecting the preset, editing it and then selecting *Update* (or *Delete*) from the same pop-up.

## DESTINATION PANEL

The most import decision when importing is deciding where to put the photos and that's where the Destination panel comes into play. You can choose whether to leave the photos in their current location or copy them to a new location. It's worth taking the time to get this right before you start importing, as moving the photos after import is a manual process. We covered the basics in the Fast Track at the beginning of the chapter ([starting on page C-5](#)), but let's go into a little more detail.

## Where will you store your photos?

Lightroom doesn't hide your photos away from you. They're kept as normal image files in folders on your hard drive. You can access them using other software, and they don't have to be stored in the same place as the catalog.

By default, Lightroom adds existing photos at their current location, wherever that may be, and copies photos from mobile devices and memory cards into the Pictures folder in your user account.

It's best practice to keep the folders of photos under a single parent folder (or one for each drive), rather than scattering them in random locations, because this makes them easy to back up and move. As your collection of photos grows, you may need to expand onto additional hard drives, which isn't a problem for Lightroom.

So where are you going to store your photos? In your Pictures folder? Or an external hard drive, perhaps? Make that decision before you go any further.

## How will you organize your photos into folders?

Once you've decided where to store the photos, you then need to decide how to organize them. There's no right or wrong way of organizing photos on your hard drive, but it's worth spending the time to set up a logical folder structure at the outset.

As far as Lightroom's concerned, your choice of folder structure doesn't make a lot of difference. Folders are just a place to store the photos, and you can use metadata and keywords to organize them. You could just dump them all into a single folder, but that would become unwieldy in time, so some kind of organization helps.

We'll come back to some sample folder structures in a moment, but first let's consider the basic principles behind the best practices.

- **Scalable**—First and foremost, your folder structure must be scalable. You may only have a few thousand photos at the moment, but your filing system needs to be capable of growing with you, without having to go back and change it. Can you add new folders to your system without disturbing existing folders, especially if some of the folders are archived offline?
- **Easy Backup & Restore**—Your folder structure needs to be easy to back up, otherwise you may miss some photos, and it needs to be easy to restore if you ever have a disaster. This is particularly important as your library grows and becomes split over multiple hard drives.
- **Standard characters**—When naming your folders, stick to



standard characters—A-Z, 0-9, hyphens (-) and underscores (\_)—to prevent problems in the future. Although your current operating system may accept other characters, you might decide to move cross-platform one day, leaving you the time-consuming job of renaming all of the folders manually.

- **No duplication**—Each photo should be stored in a single location, plus backups.
- **Consistent**—You should always know where a photo should go without having to think about it. If you have to debate each time, there's a higher chance of making a mistake.

### Why use a date-based folder structure?

The simplest option for most people is to use a date-based folder structure. It ticks all of the boxes, and more:

- It's scalable, because you just keep adding new dates to the end.
- It's easy to back up the original photos, even to write-once media like optical discs, because you're adding new photos to the latest folders. (Note that if you save derivative files with the original files, such as those edited in other software, you might still be adding photos to older folders too.)
- It's easy to restore from a good backup. In the event of a disaster, it's even possible to rebuild from files rescued by recovery software, because the capture dates are stored in the file metadata.
- It uses standard characters which are accepted by all operating systems.
- The folders can be nested with days inside of months inside of years, so you don't have a long unwieldy list of folders.
- Lightroom can create the folder structure for you automatically on import, so you don't even have to organize it manually.

#### THE DAM BOOK

We could write a whole book on Digital Asset Management, and the pros and cons of various systems, but fortunately, the world-renowned DAM expert Peter Krogh has already done so. If it's a subject that you would like to learn more about, I recommend The DAM Book <http://www.Lrq.me/dambook>

### Why not organize the photos by topic?

Before you used photo management software, such as Lightroom, you may have organized your photos by subject, so why not carry on doing that? Two reasons: duplication and consistency.

A file can only be in one folder at a time, so if you divide your photos up by topic, how do you decide where a photo should go?

If you have a photo of Mary and Susan, should it go in the *Mary* folder or the *Susan* folder? Perhaps you duplicate in both folders, but then,

what happens when you have a larger group of people? Do you duplicate the photo in all of their folders too, rapidly filling your hard drive and making it difficult to track? And then when you come to make adjustments to that photo, do you have to find it in all of those locations to update those copies too?

Folders work best as storage buckets rather than organizing tools. If you keep one copy of each photo (plus backups!) in a folder, you can then use keywords, collections and other metadata to group and find photos easily. That photo of Mary and Susan may be stored in a 2015 folder, but would show up when you searched for Mary, Susan, or even that it was taken at the beach.

### **Can I adapt a dated folder structure to suit me?**

That's not to say you shouldn't adapt the folder structure to suit your needs.

If you're grouping photos by day or month, you may want to add a descriptive word to the folder name to describe the overall subject, for example, *2015-04-21 Zoo* or *2015-06\_Vacation*. This makes it easy to find the photos in any other file browser too.

A wedding photographer may prefer to use a folder for each wedding within a parent year folder, sorted by name rather than date, for example, *2015/John\_Kate\_wedding\_20150421*.

If you're not shooting thousands of photos a year, you may decide that you don't need a full folder hierarchy with one folder per day. A folder for each year may be plenty, or perhaps one per month.

If you shoot for work as well as pleasure, you may want to have separate dated folder structures for Work vs. Personal. But if you decide to split your system, make sure there are no overlaps where a photo may fit into more than one category.

Alternative filing systems aren't 'wrong' but you'll save yourself a lot of headaches if you follow the basic principles. If you're not using a basic dated structure, make sure you think it through properly, and perhaps discuss it with other experienced digital photographers, in case they can see a pitfall that you've missed.

Also, consider how you're going to manage derivatives—retouched masters, and copies exported for other purposes. Are you going to manage these alongside your originals, and if so, how are they going to be backed up and archived?

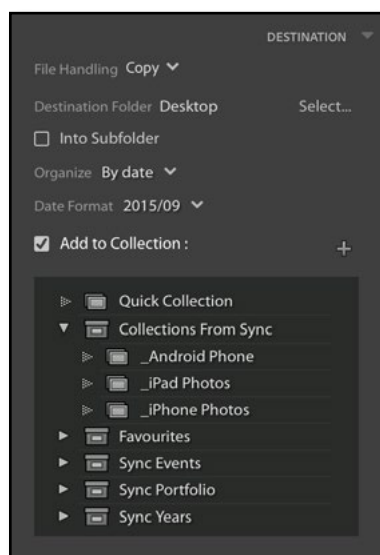
#### **ASK FOR HELP**

There's a friendly group of photographers at <http://www.lightroomforums.net/> who will be happy to discuss your proposed folder structure and point out the pros and cons.

## DELETE FROM A MEMORY CARD

When you're importing from a device such as a camera or card reader, Lightroom disables the *Add* option to protect you from accidental loss. If you use *Add* to reference the photos directly on the card, you could format the card believing that the files are safely imported into Lightroom, only to discover that Lightroom can no longer find the files.

There's also no *delete photos from memory card once uploaded* option, because most file corruption happens during file transfer, and it's good practice to verify that the data is safe before you delete the files. Formatting the cards in your camera, rather than the computer, also minimizes the risk of corruption.



▲ **Figure 25.22** Decide where to store your photos and how to organize them using the Destination panel.

## FOLDERS PANEL SHORTCUT

In the Library module, right-click on a folder in the Folders panel and select *Import to this Folder* to automatically open the Import dialog and set your Destination folder.

## Should I select *Copy* or *Add*?

At the top of the Destination panel, the first decision is whether to copy the photos to a new location or leave them where they are. (Figure 25.22)

- **Copy** copies the photos to a new location of your choice—perhaps an external drive—and organizes them using a folder structure of your choice. As it's duplicating the photos, it takes up additional hard drive space, so it's primarily used when copying photos from a memory card or other device, rather than importing existing photos from the hard drive.

If you've used previous Lightroom versions, the *Copy as DNG* option in the old dialog has been converted to a *Convert to DNG* checkbox in the Advanced panel, to be combined with the *Copy* option.

- **Add** leaves the files in their current folder structure with their existing filenames, and references them, or links to them, in that original location. This is a great option for importing existing photos if you already have an organized filing system. You'll note that some of the options on the right are missing, since they don't apply when adding photos without copying them.

## How do I select a Destination folder?

If you've selected *Copy*, then you need to choose where to store the photos. Select your **Destination Folder** by clicking the **Select** button and navigating to your chosen folder. Any folders that Lightroom creates are placed inside your selected folder.

## I've chosen Copy—how do I organize the photos into a folder structure that suits me?

How the photos are organized within your selected folder depends on your **Organize** pop-up selection. You have three choices:

- **By date** gives you a choice of date-based folder structures. It automatically organizes your photos into a tidy folder structure.
- **Into one folder** places the photos in the single folder that you select. It allows you to create your own folder structure manually. For example, a portrait photographer may create a folder for each shoot, or you may choose to create a folder for each family event you attend.
- To create a new subfolder, check the **Into Subfolder** checkbox and enter the name of your new subfolder in the field to the right.
- **By original folders** imports in the same nested hierarchy as their existing structure, but at a new location. This is useful if you're copying existing folders of photos and you wish to keep the existing organization.

## How do I pick a date structure?

If you select *By date*, the **Date Format** pop-up appears, giving you a choice of difference dated folder structures. (Figure 25.23)

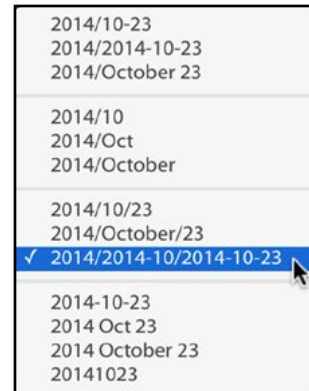
The slash (/) creates nested folders so 2014/10/07 creates a folder 07 inside of a folder 10 inside of a folder 2014, not a single folder called 2014/10/07.

If you want a single folder, you need to use a format with hyphens (-) or underscores (\_), such as the 2014-10-07 format.

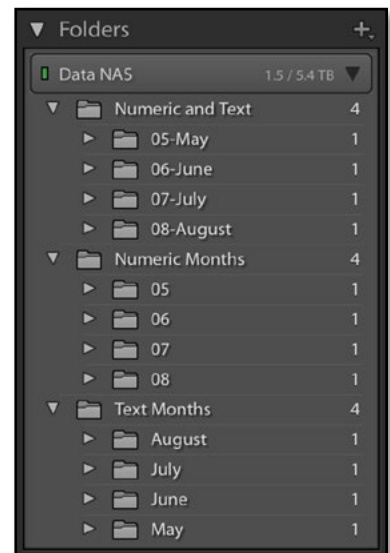
### SORTING DATES

To sort the folders in chronological order, use 05 for the month rather than the word May.

The Folders panel sorts in alpha-numeric order and isn't quite smart enough to know that May should come before August. (Figure 25.24)

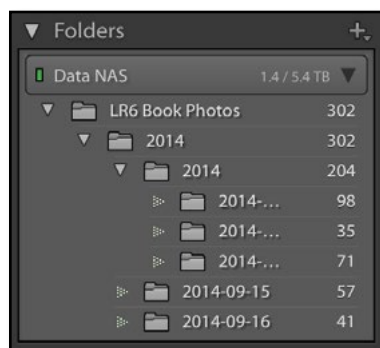


▲ **Figure 25.23** A selection of dated folder structures are available in the Date Format pop-up menu.



▲ **Figure 25.24** A selection of dated folder structures are available in the Date Format pop-up menu.





▲ **Figure 25.25** In this case, we've selected the wrong folder, resulting in nested 2014 folders. We should have selected the LR6 Book Photos folder.

## Why are my year folders being nested inside other year folders?

There's one particular thing to look out for here... nested year folders. If the Destination panel shows a 2014 folder inside another 2014 folder, as shown in **Figure 25.25**, you've selected the wrong Destination folder. Click on the parent folder (*LR6 Book Photos* in this screenshot) and the 2014 month/day folders will slip back into the correct place in the hierarchy.

The 2014 folder has been selected, resulting in the new 2014 folder being nested inside. If you select the LR6 Book Photos folder, then it would work correctly.

If it goes wrong, don't panic. Just use the instructions in the Managing Your Photos chapter starting on [page 121](#) to move them to the correct location.

## Can Lightroom manage my photos, like iTunes moves my music files?

Lightroom doesn't automatically manage or rearrange your photos once they've been imported. You can move the photos manually by dragging and dropping them into other folders within the Library module, but that could be a big job, so it's better to decide on a sensible filing system at the outset.

Once you've imported the photos, don't tidy up or rename them using Explorer (Windows) / Finder (Mac) or other software, because Lightroom would no longer know where to find them, leaving you the labor-intensive job of relinking the files individually. We'll investigate how to do that in the Missing Files section [starting on page 525](#), but it's easier to prevent than to fix.

### RENAMING DATED FOLDERS

You can't edit the new folder names in the Import dialog, for example, to add a description after the date. Once the photos have finished importing, you can rename any of the folders by right-clicking on the folder in the Folders panel and selecting *Rename*.

## How do I add imported photos to a collection while importing?

While you're importing the photos, you can also add them to a collection. This is particularly useful if you use Lightroom mobile sync, your workflow is designed around collections, or you're importing photos from an event that spans multiple days such as a vacation.

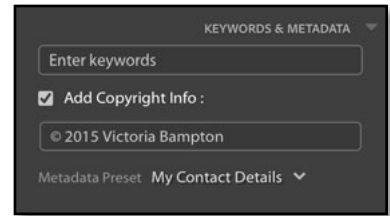
Check the **Add to Collection** checkbox to display and select your existing collections and collection sets, or click on the + button to create a new collection. You can only add the photos to a single collection while importing, but you can add them to additional collections once the import completes.

## KEYWORDS & METADATA PANEL

Next in line is the Keywords & Metadata panel (**Figure 25.26**). These options allow you to apply metadata to the photos. The settings apply to all the photos in the current import.

### Should I apply keywords in the Import dialog?

Keywords can also be applied while importing the photos by typing them in the **Enter Keywords** field. (If you're on a Mac, the label is almost impossible to see, but it's the first field in the Keywords & Metadata panel.) They're applied to all the photos in the current import, so it's only useful for keywords that apply to everything. Specific keywords are better applied individually in the Library module.



▲ **Figure 25.26** The Keywords & Metadata panel allows you to add metadata to the photos at the time of import, ensuring that no photos are forgotten.

### How do I add copyright metadata to my photos?

Using the **Add Copyright Info** field, you can add your chosen copyright. In many countries, the copyright notice requires the copyright symbol ©, the year of first publication and then the name of the copyright owner, for example, © 2015 Victoria Bampton. Copyright laws vary by country, so please check your local laws for exact specifications.

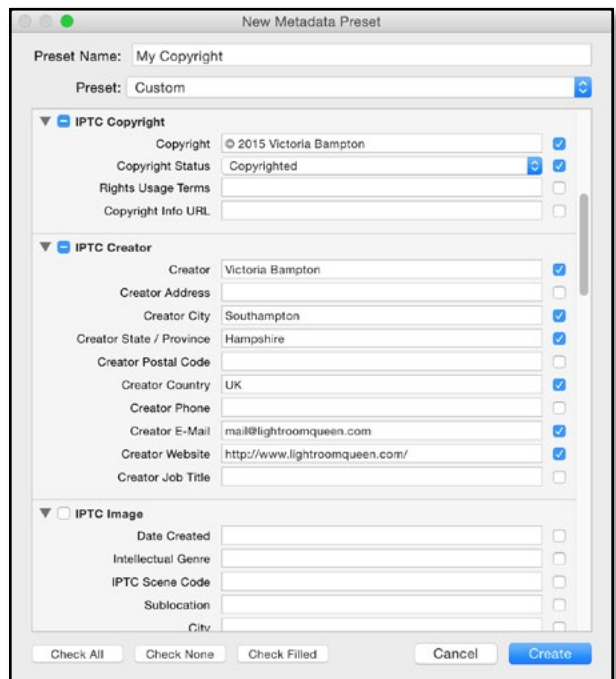
### How do I create a metadata preset?

Import is the ideal time to apply more detailed metadata, such as your name and contact details, to ensure that all of your photos include this vital information. To create a metadata preset:

1. Select **New** in the **Metadata Preset** pop-up and the New Metadata Preset dialog appears. (**Figure 25.27**)
2. At the top, enter a name for the preset such as "Copyright Preset".
3. Enter your copyright information below. Only checked fields are saved in the preset.

You may also want to include personal details such as your name, address, website and other contact details.

▼ **Figure 25.27** Create a Metadata preset to automatically embed your contact details in every photo.



## COPYRIGHT SYMBOL

To add a © symbol in the Copyright field, hold down Alt while typing 0 1 6 9 on the numberpad (Windows), type Ctrl-Alt-C (Windows) / Opt-G (Mac). Lightroom automatically enters it into the *Add Copyright Info* field for your convenience.

## REMOVE EXISTING METADATA

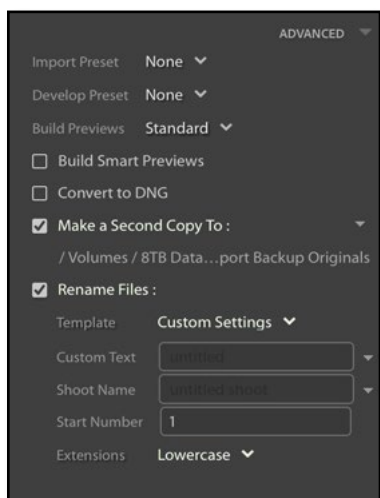
To remove metadata while importing the photos, perhaps because you've entered metadata in other software and want a fresh start, check the applicable fields in a Metadata preset but leave the fields blank. This prevents the metadata being added to Lightroom's catalog.

4. Press the *Create* button to return to the Import dialog, where your new preset is automatically selected.

The *Copyright* field in a metadata preset overrides the *Add Copyright Info* field contents.

## ADVANCED PANEL

The Advanced panel contains further file handling settings. We've already covered the Import Preset pop-up on [page C-16](#), but there are further options to consider.



▲ **Figure 25.28** The Advanced panel contains presets, previews and renaming settings, among other things.

## How do I apply a Develop Preset during import?

The **Develop Preset** pop-up allows you to apply a Develop preset to the photos while importing, for example, you may always apply a specific preset to all studio portraits as a starting point. *None* just applies the default settings to new photos but preserves any existing Develop settings stored with the files, so it's the option to choose if you're ever uncertain. Be careful not to confuse *None* with *Lightroom General Presets > Zeroed* which sets every slider back to zero even if there were existing settings.

## Why do I have to create previews? Why can't I just look at the photos?

The next pop-up is **Build Previews**. All raw processors create their own previews because raw data has to be converted in order to be viewed as an image. Lightroom creates previews of all file types, so that non-destructive edits can be previewed without damaging the original image data. These previews also allow you to view the photos when the original files are offline, for example, when your external drive is disconnected.

## APPLYING DIFFERENT SETTINGS

You can't apply different settings to different photos in the same import. You could start the first import with selected photos, however doing so runs the risk of missing a photo or two. It's easier to import all the photos in a single process and then add the different settings, or move photos into different folders in the Library module once they've all finished importing. All the settings that are available in the Import dialog, such as Metadata and Develop presets, can also be applied in the Library module.

## What size previews should I build?

There are four preview size options:

- **Minimal**—stores the thumbnail preview embedded in the file. It's a quick option initially, but it's a very small low quality preview, usually with a black edging and about 160px along the long edge, so you then have to wait to for previews to build as you browse. Minimal previews aren't color managed.
- **Embedded & Sidecar**—stores the main preview embedded in the file (approx. 1024px or larger), so it's also quick to import, but gives you something to look at while waiting for Lightroom to build its own previews.
- **Standard**—builds the previews immediately after import, so it takes time initially but it's much quicker when you're viewing the photos.
- **1:1**—builds full size previews. They're slower to build, and take up more space on the hard drive, but they're much quicker when browsing if you need to zoom in to check focus.

There's also a **Build Smart Previews** checkbox. Smart Previews are primarily used for editing the files when the originals are offline, for example, when the original files are on a disconnected external drive. If your original files are always accessible, you can leave this unchecked. We'll come back to Previews & Smart Previews in more detail [starting on page 102](#).

## How do I convert to DNG?

The rest of the options are only available when copying photos to a new location.

The **Convert to DNG** checkbox converts the copies of any raw files to DNG format, leaving the originals untouched.

DNG, or Digital Negative, is an openly documented raw file format. Some cameras create DNG files natively, and other raw files can also



be converted to the DNG format. It's worth understanding the pros and cons so you can make an informed decision. In the Appendix [starting on page A-1](#), we explore all the benefits and disadvantages, as well as how DNG can be integrated into your workflow.

### What does the *Make a Second Copy* option do?

The **Make a Second Copy To** checkbox backs up your original files to the location of your choice, in a dated folder called "Imported on [date]". If you choose to rename your files while importing, these backups are renamed to match, but they always remain in their original file format, even if you're converting the working files to DNG while importing.

The Second Copy option is useful as a temporary backup, while the photos make their way into your primary backup system, but it's not a replacement for good primary backups as it doesn't replicate your working folder structure. We'll consider backup systems in the next chapter [starting on page 61](#).

#### FILENAME CHARACTERS

It's sensible to only use standard characters, such as plain letters and numbers, and use underscores ( \_ ) or hyphens ( - ) instead of spaces when you're setting up your filenames, so your filenames will be fully compatible with web browsers and other operating systems without having to be renamed again. Some characters, such as / \ : ! @ # \$ % < > , [ ] { } & \* ( ) + = may have specific uses in the operating system or Lightroom's database, causing all sorts of trouble, so those are best avoided.

For more information on recommended filename limitations, check <http://www.Lrq.me/cv-filenames>

#### FILE RENAMING

Most cameras use fairly non-descriptive file names such as IMG\_5968. The problem with these names is, over the course of time, you'll end up with multiple photos with the same name.

Using the **Rename Files** options in the Advanced panel (**Figure 25.29**), you can rename your photos while you're importing them. (If your Import dialog is set to *Add*, you won't be able to rename while importing. Either change to the *Copy* option, or wait until the photos are imported and rename in the Library module on [page 130](#).)

### How will you name your photos?

The main thing to consider when naming your files is how you'll make the names unique. If a file doesn't have a unique name, and it's accidentally moved to another folder, other photos could be overwritten.

The date and time works well as a unique file name, for example, YYYYMMDD-HHMMSS (year month day—hour minute second). If you regularly shoot in sub-second bursts or you prefer to keep to the camera file name, YYYYMMDD-original file number (and a camera code if you're shooting with more than one camera) can work well with a low risk of duplication.

Others prefer a sequence number combined with some custom text, for example, *Vacation2015\_003.jpg*. Don't add the words *Vacation2015* into the template itself, otherwise you'll have to go back to the Filename Template Editor each time you need to change it. Instead, use the *Custom Text* and *SequenceNumber(001)* tokens, so you can enter *Vacation2015* directly in the Import dialog.

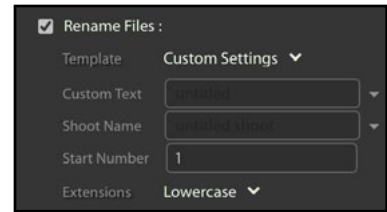
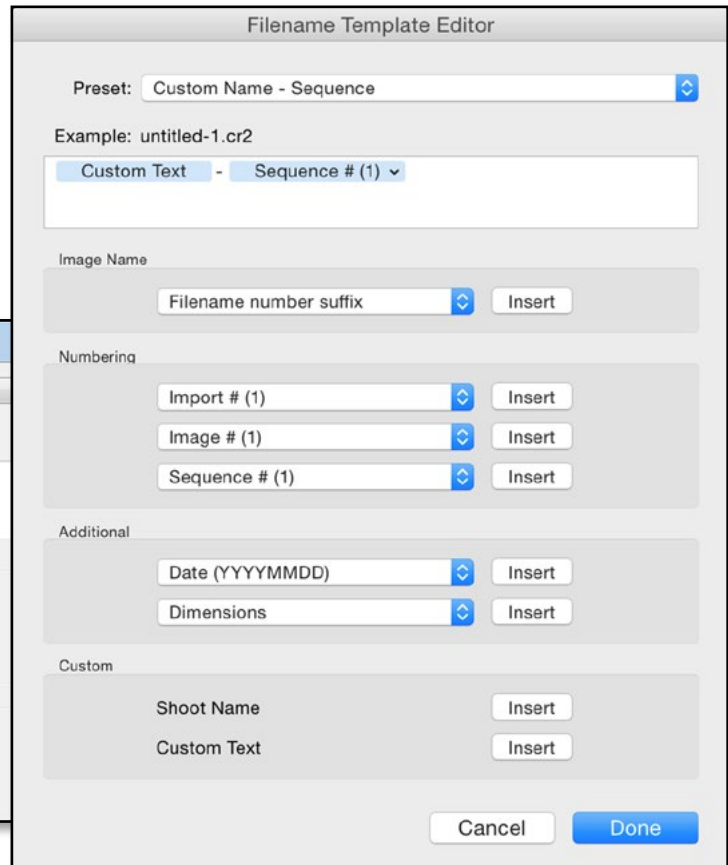
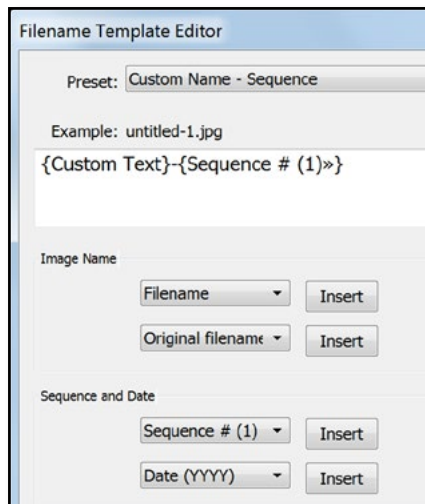
You can rename the files at any time, as long as you do it within Lightroom, but doing so while importing means your initial backups will have the same names as the working files. This can be invaluable if you have to restore from import backups.

### How do I rename the files while importing?

To rename the files, check the **Rename Files** checkbox and select a template from the pop-up to the right. There's a selection of templates built in to Lightroom, but if you select *Edit* in the **Template** pop-up, you can create your own template using tokens in the Filename Template Editor. (Figures 25.30 & 25.31)

► **Figure 25.30** Use the Filename Template Editor to build a filename structure of your choice.

▼ **Figure 25.31** The Windows version displays the tokens as curly brackets rather than lozenges.



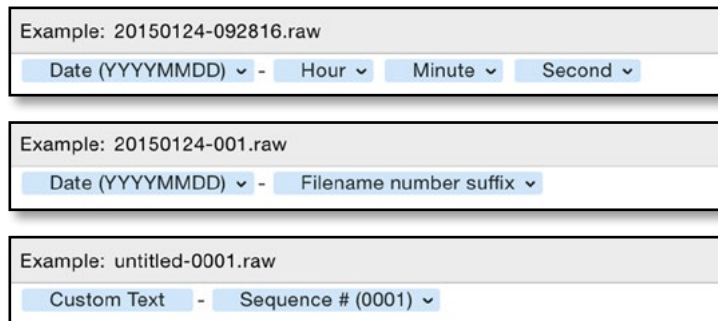
▲ **Figure 25.29** The Advanced panel allows you to rename the photos at the time of import, which means that all versions and backups of the photos will have the same name.

► **Figure 25.32** These are a few example filename templates.

The first one becomes  
20150124-092816.jpg.

The second one becomes  
20150124-001.jpg.

The last one becomes  
London2015-0001.jpg.



## How do I build a filename template?

1. In the Filename Template Editor, click in the white field and delete the existing tokens. The tokens appear as text in curly brackets on Windows, or blue lozenges on Mac.

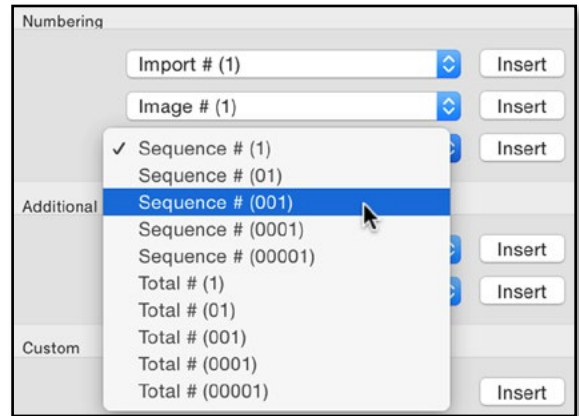
Below the white field is a selection of pop-ups, each containing different types of tokens. There's a huge selection to choose from! The tokens are grouped into pop-ups. The first contains filename tokens (e.g. current filename), then there are 3 pop-ups for numbering tokens (e.g. sequence numbers) with 1 to 5 digits, then date-based tokens (e.g. YYYYMMDD) and metadata-based tokens (e.g. camera model, star ratings, etc.). Finally there are *Insert* buttons for two custom text fields—*Shoot Name* and *Custom Text*.

2. To add a token, click the *Insert* button next to one of the pop-ups or select a different option from a pop-up. (**Figure 25.32**)
3. Repeat to add additional tokens.
4. You can type directly into the white field to add punctuation such as hyphens and underscores between tokens. You can also add text such as your initials. Add a custom text field for text that changes regularly, such as the name of the shoot or other descriptive text.
5. Finally, save it as a preset by selecting the Preset pop-up at the top of the dialog and choosing *Save Current Settings as New Preset* and giving it a name.
6. Press *Done* to close the dialog, and check that your new preset is selected in the Advanced panel.

## How do I add additional padding zeros to sequence numbers?

In the *Numbering* pop-ups, such as *Sequence #*, you'll note that there are options from (1) to (00001). (Figure 25.30) Some programs can have problems sorting in intelligent numerical order, so they sort files as 1, 10, 11... 19, 2, 20, 21. The solution is to add extra padding zeros to set the filenames to 001, 002, and so forth.

To use a padded 3-digit sequence number, select *Sequence # (001)* instead of *Sequence # (1)* from the pop-up menu.



▲ **Figure 25.30** Lightroom offers a range of numbering systems, including a standard *Sequence* number which you set in the Import dialog.

## What's the difference between *Import#*, *Image#*, *Sequence#* and *Total#*?

While you're looking at the *Numbering* pop-ups, you'll notice that there are a number of different types of sequence number available.

- **Sequence #** is the most useful, and the most familiar type of numbering. It's an automatically-increasing number which starts at the number you set in the File Naming panel in the Import dialog or in the Rename Photos dialog in the Library module.
- **Import #** increases with each batch of photos you import. The first time you use the token during import, it's set to 1, then the next time it's 2, etc. It's only available while importing photos.
- **Image #** increases with individual photo you import. The first photo is set to 0, then the next is 1, etc.

Both *Import #* and *Image #* have starting numbers set in *Catalog Settings > File Handling* tab, with **Import Number** used for *Import #* and **Photos Imported** used for *Image #*. (Figure 25.31) If you don't use these tokens, the count doesn't increase. Later, when renaming in the Library module, *Image #* always starts at 1 regardless of the Catalog Settings.

- **Total #** refers to the number of photos it's renaming in one go, so if you're renaming 8 photos, the *Total #* token is replaced with 8. It's only available in Library module Rename Photos dialog.

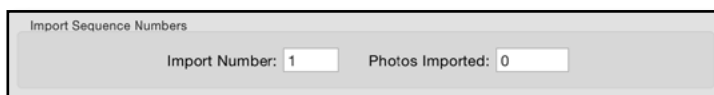
## Where do I enter custom text and start numbers?

After creating your filename template, the availability of the additional fields in the Advanced panel depends on which tokens are used in the selected template.

### NUMBER PER DAY OR FOLDER

Lightroom can't automatically restart the numbering for each day (i.e. day3-001.jpg) or remember the last number used in a folder (i.e. start at London-253.jpg). To use that type of numbering system, rename the photos in chunks in the Library module, using the *Sequence #* token and setting a start number manually for each batch.

► **Figure 25.31** In *Catalog Settings > File Handling* tab, you can set the Import Sequence Numbers which are used for the *Import #* and *Image #* tokens.



## RENAMING OPTIONS

The available options differ slightly between the Import dialog and the Library module. Import has a *Shoot Name* token, which isn't available in the Library module, but the Library module gains tokens such as *Folder Name*, *Original Filename*, *Copy Name*, slightly different sequence number options and additional IPTC metadata. The basic principles remain the same.

There are two custom text fields—**Custom Text** and **Shoot Name**—which allow you to add custom text into your filename without returning to the Filename Template Editor each time you want to change the text. The arrow to the right of each field displays recent entries.

**Start Number** is used with the *Sequence #* token, allowing you to set a starting number of your choice. For example, you may want your numbering to start at 1, or you may want to carry on from a specific number such as 253.

The **Extensions** pop-up sets the case of the file extension (e.g. .jpg, .JPG, etc.). The default is *Leave as-is*, but you can change it to *uppercase* or *lowercase* if you prefer. That choice is personal preference.

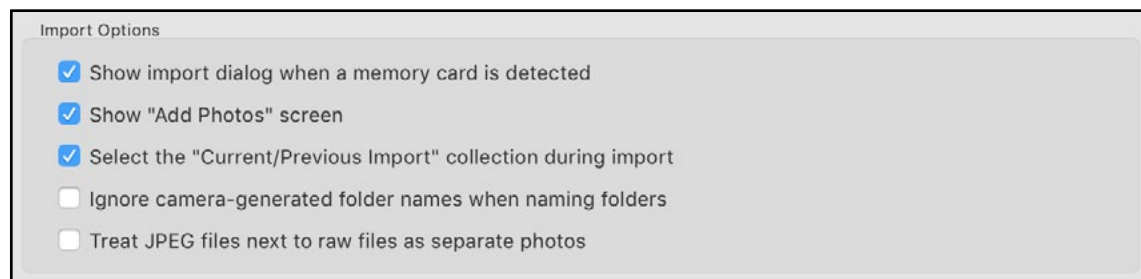
## AFTER PRESSING IMPORT

Having set up your import preferences, click the **Import X Photos** button in the top right corner of the dialog to start the import. The *Cancel* button closes the dialog without importing any photos.

The import runs as a background task, allowing you to start (or continue) working in Lightroom while it adds the new photos to the catalog. The progress bar displays in the Activity Center in the top left corner of the screen.

Lightroom selects the *Current Import* collection in the Library module's Catalog panel while importing the photos. If you switch to another folder or collection, it then flips back to the same collection (now called *Previous Import*) automatically when the import completes. This can be frustrating if you're trying to work on other photos while the import runs in the background, so there's a **Select the 'Current/Previous Import' collection during import** checkbox in the *Preferences dialog > General* tab. (Figure 25.32) It's checked by default,

▼ **Figure 25.32** Unchecking the *Select 'Current/Previous Import' collection during import* checkbox stops Lightroom automatically switching views when an import completes.



but unchecking it prevents Lightroom from automatically switching view.

Once the import completes and you've built standard-sized or 1:1 previews, visually check the files to ensure that they're not corrupted and your backups are safe before wiping your memory cards.

Some photographers like to delete the files from the memory card using Explorer (Windows) / Finder (Mac), as a reminder that the card's OK to reuse, but it's worth then reformatting the card in the camera. This reduces the risk of corruption.

## TROUBLESHOOTING IMPORT

We've covered all the controls you need to know about, but there are a few issues that could prevent you importing your photos. To avoid you tripping at the first hurdle, we'll run through the most frequent of these problems and error messages now, and translate them into more helpful terms.

### How do I stop the Import dialog hanging?

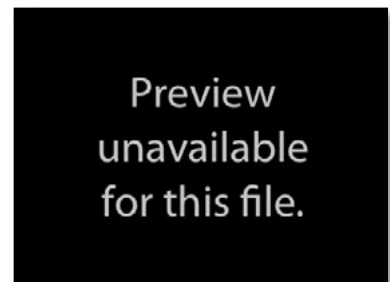
If the Import dialog simply hangs before displaying any or all of the thumbnails, it's usually caused by having a mobile phone or tablet attached to the computer. It can also be caused by a drive that's slow to respond (perhaps a network drive), or cloud drives that appear as network drives (e.g. JungleDrive). Try detaching all peripherals from your computer and ejecting network drives before attempting to open the Import dialog again, to narrow down the cause of the problem.

### Why can't I see my photos in the Import dialog?

Assuming you've correctly selected a source, there are a few reasons why the thumbnails of the photos might not be visible.

If the photo cells are visible, but the thumbnails are black and say *Preview unavailable for this file* (Figure 25.33), there are a few likely reasons:

- The raw file format isn't supported by your Lightroom version.
- The file is corrupt or has the wrong file extension.
- The file doesn't have an embedded preview.
- Lightroom is unable to get the previews from the images. If your camera's connected directly to the computer, a lack of previews



▲ **Figure 25.33** If a preview is unavailable, Lightroom displays a black thumbnail in the Import dialog.



## FILE FORMATS

Lightroom can import photos and videos in the following formats:

- Camera raw file formats for supported cameras. You can check whether your camera is supported by the latest version of Lightroom by visiting Adobe's website: <http://www.Lrq.me/camerasupport>
- Digital Negative (DNG) format
- PSD files set to Maximize Compatibility (8-bit & 16-bit only)
- TIFF (8-bit, 16-bit & 32-bit)
- JPEG
- PNG files
- Some video formats from digital still cameras—AVI, MOV, MP4 and the video files from within AVCHD folders. There's a full list at <http://www.Lrq.me/lr6-video>

There are a few limitations to be aware of:

- Photos can be no larger than 65,000 pixels along the longest edge, and no more than 512 megapixels (not megabytes)—whichever is smaller. A photo that is 60,000 x 60,000 is under the 65,000 pixel limit, but it still won't import as it's over the 512 megapixel limit. As most cameras range between 8-36 megapixels, that's only likely to become an issue for huge panoramic or poster shots created in Photoshop.
- CMYK, Lab and Grayscale photos can be imported and managed, but editing and exporting them converts them to RGB. This could result in unexpected shifts in files with other color modes, so you may prefer to control the conversion to RGB yourself using Photoshop, and then import the RGB file into Lightroom for further editing.
- PNG files can be imported and managed, but editing in Photoshop or exporting requires conversion to another format (i.e. TIFF/PSD). Transparency shows as white in Lightroom.
- 32-bit HDR files can only be DNG or TIFF format.
- AVCHD format has limited support—Lightroom imports the MTS video clips but not the whole AVCHD folder structure. You'll need to manually copy the AVCHD folder structure from the memory card to your hard drive if you want to retain the additional metadata.
- Sound files (e.g. WAV and MP3) with the same names as imported photos are copied and marked as sidecar files. This means that they're listed in the Metadata panel, and if you move or rename the original file, the sidecar is also updated.
- Files that aren't created by digital cameras, for example, text files that you may have placed alongside the photos, are not copied to the new location, so always check before formatting the card or drive if you've added extra files.

## RAW + JPEG FILE FORMATS

If you've imported the raw files already, and you now want to import the JPEGs as separate photos, you can turn off the checkbox and re-import that folder—the raw files are skipped as they already exist in the catalog, and the JPEGs are imported as separate photos. The raw files remain marked as Raw+JPEG, and there isn't an easy way of changing that. Removing them from the catalog and reimporting them resets that label, but if you've made any changes since import, these changes may be lost, so the best solution currently is to close your eyes and ignore them.

can be a result of problems with the camera driver at the operating system level. You may consider purchasing a card reader, as they're usually quicker, reduce the wear and tear on your camera, and can show previews more reliably.

- Lightroom simply hasn't finished retrieving all the embedded previews yet.

Regardless of the cause, you can go ahead and press *Import* as normal. Lightroom displays a more descriptive error message if it can't import the photos. We'll discuss some of these errors shortly.

If the photos are completely missing from the Import dialog, there are three main possibilities:

- The photos are in a subfolder inside the selected source, but you've forgotten to check *Include Subfolders*.
- The file type isn't supported, for example, Lightroom won't display Word documents. See the File Formats sidebar for a list of supported file types.
- In Lightroom's *Preferences > General tab* is an option to **Treat JPEG files next to raw files as separate photos**. With this option checked, Lightroom displays the JPEG files alongside the raw files, ready for import. If the checkbox is unchecked, the JPEGs are added as sidecars when you import the matching raw file but they're not visible in the Import dialog.

## SIDECAR FILES

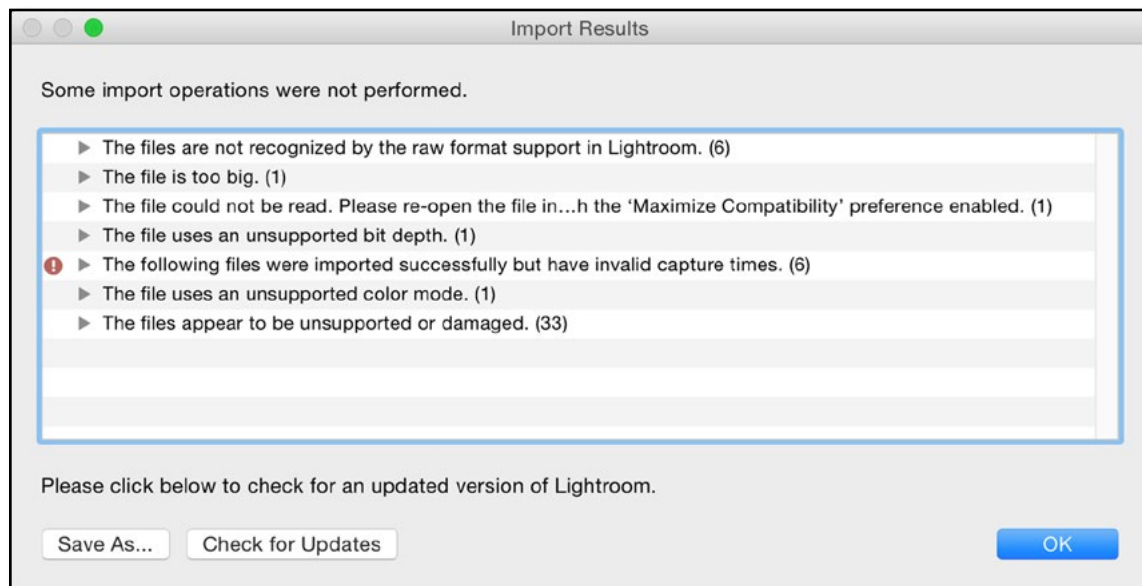
Sidecar files aren't treated like photos, so you can't view them separately. If you move or rename the primary file (usually a raw file), the sidecar file is moved or renamed too. Sidecar files can be metadata files such as XMP files, audio files such as WAV files, or image files such as the JPEG from a RAW+JPEG pair. If the sidecar is an image file, the filename of the primary file displays as IMG0001.CR2 + JPEG. Sidecar files are also listed in the Metadata panel.

## What does this error message mean?

If Lightroom can't import the selected files, it displays an error message (Figure 25.34) starting with **Some import operations were not performed** followed by the reason:

**"Could not copy a file to the requested location."**

If Lightroom can't copy the photos to their new location, it's usually because the Destination folder is read-only. Try another location with



▲ **Figure 25.34** If Lightroom can't import your photos, it lists the photos in the Import Results dialog, along with an error message explaining the reason for the failure. Many of these issues can easily be overcome.

standard folder permissions, such as the desktop, to confirm that permissions are the problem. If it works correctly on the desktop, use the operating system to correct the permissions for that folder. If the permissions appear to be correct already, it may be a parent folder that has the incorrect permissions. (You'll need to Google for instructions on correcting file/folder permissions, as it's an operating system function rather than Lightroom.)

Other possibilities include the drive being nearly full or the drive being formatted using an incompatible format, such as a Mac computer trying to write to an NTFS formatted drive.

#### **"The files could not be read."**

When Lightroom says *"The files could not be read,"* it more frequently means that they couldn't be written. Yes, I know that's not very helpful! As with the *"Could not copy a file to the requested location"* error, check the folder permissions for the Destination folder and its parent folders.

Lightroom also shows *"The files could not be read"* error if the memory card or camera is removed while the photos are still copying, or if the photos are deleted from the source folder before the import completes.

#### **"The files already exist in the catalog."**

If you're importing a large number of photos and you press the Import button before Lightroom's finished checking the new photos against the catalog, it may get to the end of the import and say *"The files already exist in the catalog."* It simply means that Lightroom didn't

need to import them as they're already registered in your catalog at that location. If you search the *All Photographs* collection or look in the folder in the Folders panel, you'll be able to find them.

**"The file is from a camera which isn't recognized by the raw format support in Lightroom."**

Each time a new camera is released, Adobe has to update Lightroom (and ACR plug-in for Photoshop) to be able to read and convert the raw files. The list of supported cameras can be found at: <http://www.Lrq.me/camerasupport>

The Lightroom updates are released at 3-4 monthly intervals. Go to *Help menu > Check for Updates* to make sure you're running the latest version. If your brand new camera doesn't appear on the list yet, you can also check to see if Adobe has released a Release Candidate of the next update.

There's one other possibility if Lightroom says *"The file is from a camera which isn't recognized by the raw format support in Lightroom."* If a raw file is corrupted, it may show this error instead of the *"unsupported or damaged"* error.

**"The file uses an unsupported color mode."**

Lightroom supports RGB, CMYK, Lab and Grayscale color modes. If you try to import a photo in another color mode, for example, Duotone, Lightroom shows the *"unsupported color mode"* error. In this case, you'll need to convert the photo to a supported color mode, or import an RGB copy as a placeholder instead.

**"The file is too big."**

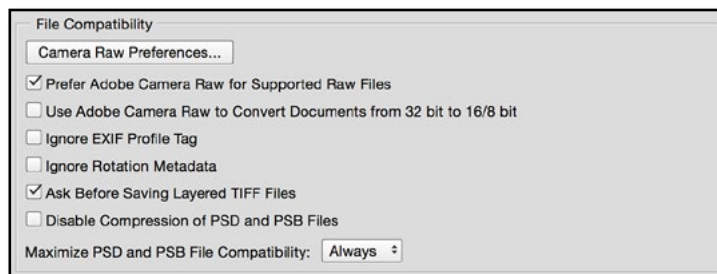
Lightroom has a file size limit of 65,000 pixels along the longest edge, and up to 512 megapixels, whichever is the smaller. If it tells you that the file is too big, then you're trying to import a photo that's larger than that—perhaps a panoramic photo. If you have any such files that you can't import, create a small version of the photo (i.e. using Photoshop) to import into Lightroom to act as a placeholder.

**"The files could not be read. Please reopen the file and save with 'Maximize Compatibility' preference enabled."**

Lightroom doesn't understand layers, so if there isn't a composite preview embedded in a layered PSD file, it can't import it and Lightroom displays an error asking you to save the file with *Maximize Compatibility* enabled.

To do so, you'll need to open the PSD files in Photoshop and re-save them. You'll find Photoshop's Preferences dialog under the *Edit menu* (Windows) / *Photoshop menu* (Mac), and in the *File Handling > File Compatibility* section, there's an option to *Maximize Compatibility*

► **Figure 25.35** Maximize Compatibility in Photoshop saves a composite layer which other applications, including Lightroom, can understand.



with other programs by embedding a composite preview in the file. (Figure 25.35) The preference only applies to PSD and PSB format files, as other formats (such as TIFF) embed the composite by default.

Maximize Compatibility does increase file size, but it ensures that other programs—not just Lightroom—can read the embedded preview even if they can't read the layers. It's safest to set your Photoshop Preferences to *Always*, or simply use TIFF format, which is generally a better choice now anyway.

#### **“The file appears to be unsupported or damaged.”**

Files that have the wrong file extension, or 32-bit PSD files, can trigger the “*unsupported or damaged*” error message. 32-bit HDR floating point TIFF or DNG files are supported, but not 32-bit PSD's. Most unsupported file formats aren't even shown in the Import dialog, but those are the exceptions.

More frequently, severe file corruption triggers the “*unsupported or damaged*” error message, although files with less significant corruption may import without warning.

### **SALVAGING CORRUPTED RAW FILES**

If you don't have an uncorrupted version, Instant JPEG from RAW may be able to extract a readable embedded JPEG preview from a corrupt raw file. You can learn more at <http://www.Lrq.me/instantjpegfromraw>

## **TETHERED SHOOTING & WATCHED FOLDERS**

Before we move on to backing up your photos, we should mention one final way of getting photos into Lightroom. Tethered shooting involves connecting your camera directly to the computer. As you shoot, the photos appear on the computer's monitor, rather than having to download them later. Lightroom offers two different options, depending on your requirements.

If you're using one of the supported cameras, you can use the Tethered Capture tool, which allows you to connect your camera to the computer, view your camera settings and trigger the shutter using Lightroom's interface.

If you're shooting wirelessly, for example, using an Eye-Fi card, or other remote capture software, you can use Auto Import to monitor a watched folder instead. Auto Import collects photos from a folder

of your choice as they appear and automatically imports them into Lightroom, moving them to a new location in the process.

## Which cameras are supported by the built-in Tethered Capture?

The current list of cameras supported for tethering can be found on Adobe's website at: <http://www.Lrq.me/tethersupport>

Lightroom uses the manufacturer's own SDK's to control the camera, which results in some slight differences between manufacturers. For example, if there's a memory card in the camera, Canon cameras can write to the memory card in addition to the computer hard drive, whereas Nikon cameras only write to the computer hard drive. Waiting for the manufacturer to release an updated SDK can also lead to delays in tethering support for new cameras. Nikon cameras are limited to the list linked above, but due a difference in the SDK's, some unlisted Canon cameras may work. Some Leica cameras are also supported.

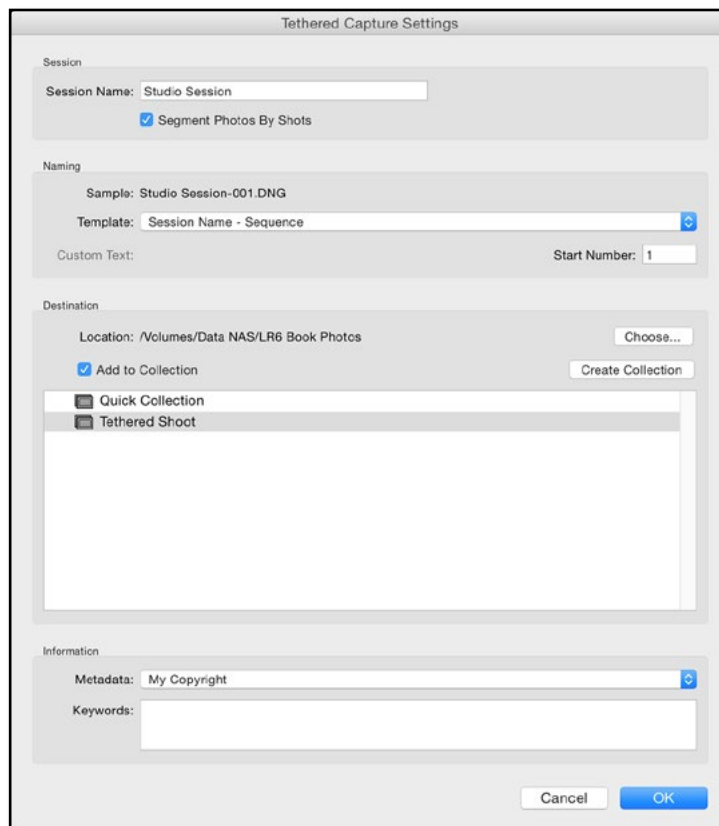
## How do I set Lightroom up to use Tethered Capture?

To set Lightroom up for tethering:

1. Connect your camera to the computer using your USB or Firewire cable. A few cameras need to be in PC Connection mode, but most need to be in PTP Mode.
2. Go to *File menu > Tethered Capture > Start Tethered Capture* and choose your settings in that dialog: **(Figure 25.36)**
  - Enter a name into the *Session Name* field. This becomes the folder name for the photos.
  - (Optional) Check the *Segment Photos by Shot* checkbox. This subdivides the photos into further subfolders, inside the *Session Name* subfolder. The *Shot Name* can be changed from the main Tethered Capture window while you're shooting.
  - Select a file naming template. The default *Session Name—Sequence* template uses the *Session Name* you've entered at the top of the dialog, followed by a 3 digit sequence number.
3. Select a *Destination* folder. The *Session Name/Shot Name* folder hierarchy is placed inside your selected folder.
4. (Optional) Select your *Metadata Preset* and any keywords to apply to the photos as they're imported.
5. Press OK to display the Tethered Capture window.



► **Figure 25.36** The Tethered Capture Settings dialog sets initial import settings including the Destination folder, file renaming and metadata.



(Figure 25.37) The Tethered Capture window displays the current camera settings, but doesn't allow you to change the settings remotely. You can drag the dialog to another location if it's getting in your way. It floats over the top of Lightroom's standard window so you can carry on working without closing the Tethered Capture window.

## CONVERT TO DNG

For performance reasons, Tethered Shooting doesn't offer the option to convert to DNG while importing. If you prefer the DNG format, once you've completed the shoot, select the files and go to *Library menu > Convert Photos to DNG* to automatically convert the files.

- (Optional) If *Segment Photos by Shot* is enabled, enter a shot name in the Shot Name dialog. To update it for future shots, click on the *Shot Name* field in the Tethered Capture window to show the dialog again.
- (Optional) Select a Develop preset to apply to each photo on import. Certain settings, such as Crop, can't be included in Develop presets, however that doesn't prevent you from applying them automatically. Simply shoot the first photo, apply your crop along with any other Develop settings, and then select the *Same as Previous* option in the Develop presets pop-up menu. Any further tethered shots automatically have those previous settings applied, including the crop.



6. Press the shutter button on the camera or the silver button on the dialog to trigger the shutter.
7. When you're finished, close the Tethered Capture window by clicking the X in the top right corner.

▲ **Figure 25.37** The Tethered Capture window shows the current camera settings and triggers the capture.

## How do I set Lightroom up to use a watched folder?

If Lightroom's tethering doesn't support your camera, you need to change the camera settings remotely, or you're shooting wirelessly, you can use other tethering tools such as EOS Utility, Camera Control Pro or Eye-fi to capture the photos and drop them into Lightroom's watched folder. Lightroom then collects the files from that watched folder, and moves them to another folder of your choice, importing them into your Lightroom catalog, renaming if you wish, and applying other settings automatically.

### To set it up:

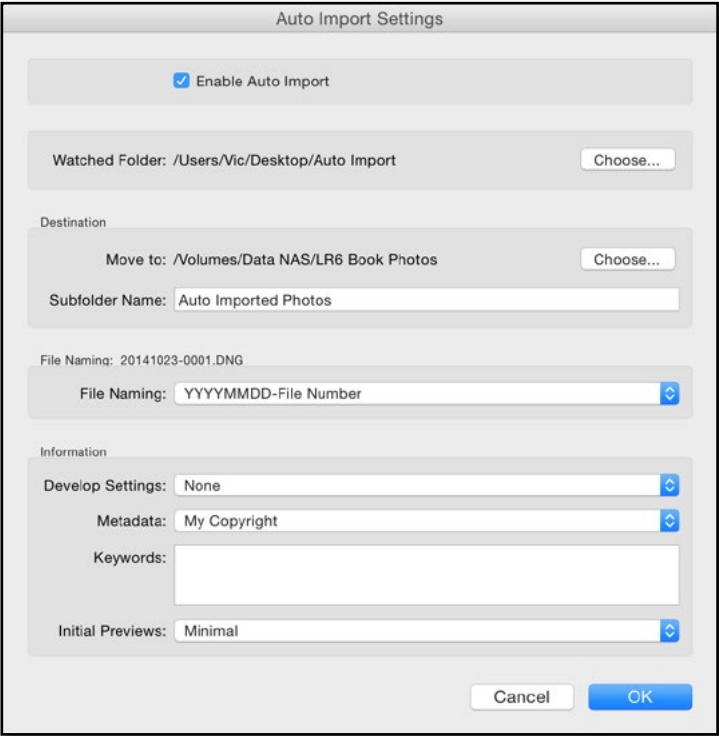
1. Go to *File menu > Auto Import Settings*.
2. In the *Watched Folder* section, select an empty folder, perhaps on your desktop. (**Figure 25.38**)
3. Select a destination folder and subfolder to store the photos.
4. Select your filename template in the *File Naming* pop-up.
5. Choose any other import options in Auto Import Settings dialog—*Develop Settings*, *Metadata Preset*, *Keywords* and *Preview Size*. These are the same as the choices in the main Import dialog.
6. Enable the *Auto Import* checkbox at the top of the dialog or go to *File menu > Auto Import > Enable Auto Import*. The watched folder needs to be empty when you enable Auto Import, and Lightroom needs to remain open.
7. To check you've set it up correctly, copy a file from your hard drive into the watched folder. As soon as the file lands in the folder, it should start the import, and you should see the file vanish from the watched folder. It should then appear in the destination folder and in Lightroom's catalog. If that works, then you've set up Lightroom properly.
8. Switch to your camera's remote capture software and set it to drop the photos into that folder.
9. Finally, connect the camera to the capture software, and ensure

### NO SUBFOLDERS

Make sure your camera's remote capture software (i.e. EOS Utility, Camera Control Pro, Sofortbild) doesn't create a dated subfolder as Lightroom won't look in any subfolders in the watched folder.

it's saving to the right folder. Release the shutter. The file appears in the watched folder, and then Lightroom moves to your destination folder and imports it into your catalog.

► **Figure 25.38** You can use alternative tethered capture software to capture your photos, and automatically import the photos into Lightroom using Auto Import.



**TETHERING SHORTCUTS**

Hide Tethered Capture Window	Ctrl T / Cmd T
Shrink Tethered Capture Window	Alt-click / Opt-click on close button
New Shot	Ctrl Shift T / Cmd Shift T
Trigger Capture	F12