

Adobe Lightroom *beta*

Part 1: Exploring the Interface



Easily organize and manage your photo libraries



Experience powerful RAW editing and enhancement features.



Print, share, and automatically generate a photo gallery webpage.



Adobe Lightroom Beta 4

notice: The 'Adobe' name is © Adobe systems incorporated.

Pretext:

The purpose of this guide is to give you a preview look into the user interface and basic uses of Adobe's new product called 'Lightroom'. Lightroom is essentially Adobe's answer to Apple's *Aperture* (*Note: Lightroom supports both MAC and PC*). Supporting over 100 different flavors of the RAW image format (including the most common NEF, CR2 and CRW), Lightroom has become one of the few PC packages to offer an all-in-one professional solution for photographers shooting both traditional and/or RAW.

As of October 2006, Lightroom is in its Beta stage, and Adobe developers have currently released it as an 'Open Beta' product. This meaning, that anyone can download and use Lightroom for free in its full functionality as its being developed. Now, because it is a 'beta' product, it's possible you'll run into bumps and glitches, but so far I have not run into one single problem; it's incredibly fast and stable for a beta product.

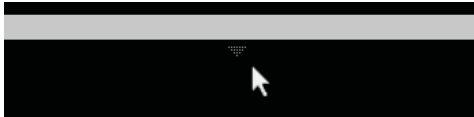
The images in this guide, and the guide itself has been tailored to the current release as of October 18th 2006, Beta release version 4.0. So if you happen to run into this program at a later date, and it appears a little off, or different, it's possible the software has adapted.

Enjoy; and I hope this guide can be of some use to you.

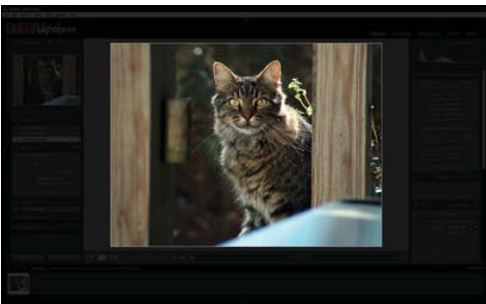
-Nick Bartone

1 Understanding the UI

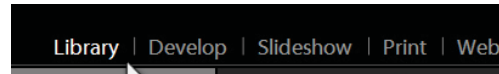
Lightroom's UI is quite possibly the most intuitive and well laid out UI that Adobe has ever produced. Options and menus are positioned in areas that simply make sense, and each of these sections can be 'hidden away' depending on what you need access to.



Adobe has given you a couple of extra features in the way of maximizing your screenspace. For example, pressing 'Tab' will show/hide the left and right menus. Pressing 'Shift-Tab' will show/hide all panels, Pressing F will toggle fullscreen and windowed mode. And pressing L will 'Dim the lights' as they call it; or, essentially it blacks out the screen with the exception of your photograph so you can view it alone.



Lightroom's UI also changes depending on what 'module' you're in.



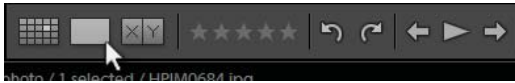
Modules

Lightroom has 5 'Modules' sensibly named; Library, Develop, Slideshow, Print, and Web. Each module gives you a pretty good idea of what its purposes are, and as I've said, Lightroom's UI will adapt depending on what module you're currently working with, to give you the tools you need.

Library

As you Might have guessed, the Library module is your general 'view all, see all' tab. This is where you will have access to all of your current image collections, the options to import and export collections, search your libraries, view images metadata, as well as make a few minor 'on the fly' modifications.

It's important to note that the menu bar directly under the image viewer has some handy features that you'll be using quite frequently. First off, is the image display modes. There are three such modes to speak of in Lightroom:



- ◆ Thumbnail mode- will show you all of the current collection's images in thumbnail form at one time.
- ◆ Full View mode- which will show you the selected 1:1, 4:1, or 'Fill' size of the selected image in your current selection.
- ◆ and X/Y mode- which will allow you to juxtapose either a before/after for comparison, or any other images side by side for whatever purposes.

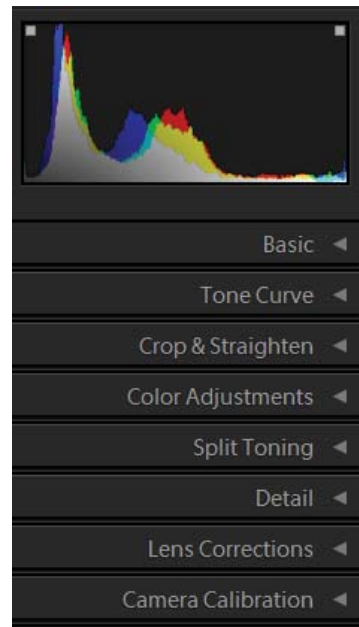
Image display modes aside, you also have a star ranking system, that will allow you personally rank images for the purposes of later 'sorting' by star ranking to quickly preview your best shots, or just for a self-prescribed e-peen boost. Next to that, you have your rotate clockwise and counter-clockwise options. And lastly a forward and backward button, to scroll through your collection's images. But be wary of that oh-so-friendly looking center button that resembles a 'play' function; because that's exactly what it does. Pressing the play button in the middle there will auto-start a fullscreen slideshow of that collection's images.

Develop

The second module on your list is called Develop. This mode gives you an amazing assortment of options and sliders to play with, to allow you to control, virtually every single aspect of the photograph; these features are broken into 8 major sections:

- ◆ Basic (exposure, white balance, saturation, etc)

- ◆ Tone Curve (gives you a curves histogram to alter the depth of lights.darks)
- ◆ Crop and Straighten (self explanatory)
- ◆ Color Adjustment (Individual sliders for the potency of every color by Hue, Saturation, and Luminence)
- ◆ Split Toning (Allows you to individually adjust the color of your image shadows/highlights)
- ◆ Detail (Sharpen, smooth, de-noise)
- ◆ Lens Correction (Chromatic Abberation reduction for Cyan/Magenta, and Blue/Yellow, unfortunately no Magenta/Green, also allows adjustment/compensation for Vingnetting)
- ◆ Camera Calibration (Adjust the tint/hue of your photograph depending on your cmaera's tendencies, ex: if you camera usually shoots more towards the green side)



The Develop section also gives you an assortment of ‘presets’ over on your left-side panel. Presets which cover a good amount of general applied photo effects, including:

Antique Grayscale

Cyanotype

Direct Positive

Grayscale Conversion

Sepia Tone

A couple different tone curve adjustments, mostly for contrast purposes

and an option called “Zero-d” to clear any previous presets you may have used.

You can also add your own ‘Presets’ for effects you may commonly use by clicking on ‘Add’ at the bottom of the left pane, and likewise you can remove presets you don’t want by clicking on ‘remove’.

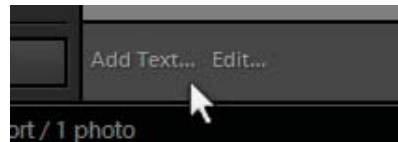
Another cool feature about this Develop section, is that there’s a history panel, that will allow you to look through exactly what you’ve modified about your image, and let you step through it process by process. instantaneously.

Slideshow

Another self-explanatory module in Lightroom; this section allows you to create a virtual slideshow using your collection of images. For me personally, I’m not all into the cheesy automated powerpoint-like slideshows, but for those of you who are, you’re in for a treat.

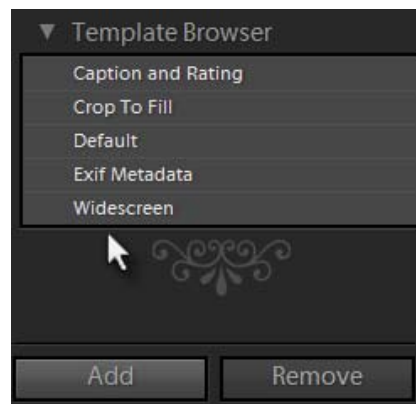
Like most other modules, this one is broken into an assortment of options and customizable effects, separated into 5 main categories; they are:

- ◆ Options (Auto-fill-frame, Toggle stroke border, and turn on or off drop shadows with sliders and modifiers for angle, radius, offset, etc)
- ◆ Layout (Toggle whether to show your guides while putting it together or not, and allows you to adjust where they fall)
- ◆ Overlays (Allows you to place ‘star rating’ or text overlays on top of your images. Verbage for the text overlays is added on that bottom menu, under the picture pane)



- ◆ Backdrop (Add a solid color, color wash, or an image backdrop)
- ◆ Playback (Adjust the speed, and fade speeds for the show. Also allows you to randomize the show, and add in music)

Likewise with the other sections, the Slideshow module offers you some pre-sets to get you started, and allows you to add your own custom presets, too.



Print

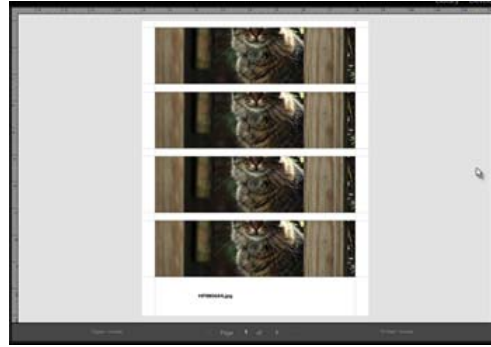
The Print module is very much like the other modules, very well thought out and complete with oodles of options to tinker with. They packed pretty much everything you could want into this module; everything from photo-information overlay, to page bleed and precise positioning.

Likewise with the other Modules, these options are broken into collapsable categories, including:

- ◆ Image Settings (Auto-fill frame, Auto rotate-to-fit, Repeat one-photo per page)
- ◆ Page Layout (Margin positioning, Page grid, Cell spacing, Cell Size, Proportion constraints, and Guidelines for Bleed, Margins and Gutters, and Image Cells)
- ◆ Overlays (Photo Information with several checkbox selections for info you want to display, and Other options including Page number, Page info, Crop Marks, Border Width, and Border display.)
- ◆ Print Job (Toggle draft-mode, Print Resolution, and selective Color Management ((managed by printer, or set to other print profile)))

The central image display will show you a preview of what your printed output will look like on paper. It's important to note, that the bottom menu, under the central image display contains two fields, one of which is where you will set your 'paper type', and the other is where you will select your 'printer'.

The Print section, like all its brothers and sisters comes complete with a few 'presets' given to you by Adobe. And likewise, you can create your own custom templates and add them on to the list, which can be a huge time saver, especially if you print a lot of similar looking media.



Web

And lastly, but most certainly not least, is the 'Web' module. I have to say, this feature itself makes the program worth it, and all the more exciting that it's just an additional feature on top of everything else.

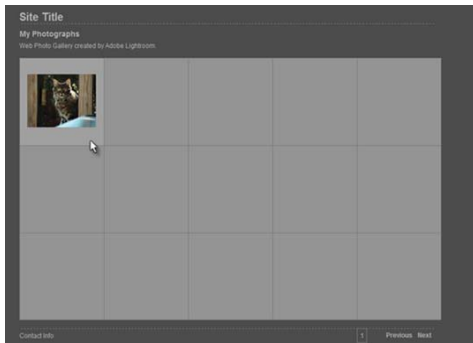
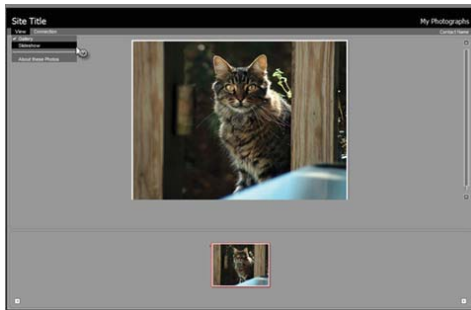
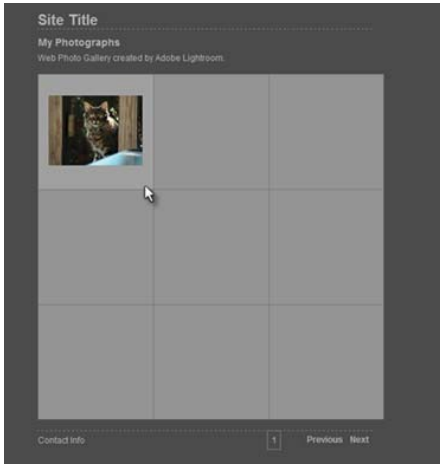
The module is every bit as self explanatory as the rest, this module helps you get your stuff on the web, simple. And by simple, I mean simply simple. Lightroom just does the work for you, and allows you to modify and customize what images you want to display, how they display, etc. Now, unfortunately, the limitations of the 'modifications' you can make are pretty tight, as they're based on the Adobe-provided templates. In later incarnations of this module, i'd like to see full support for your own provided CSS, XHTML, and HTML templates, but for now, you're pretty much limited to the 3 provided templates.

I'm happy to note, however, that the provided templates actually 'aren't' bad. You're given a choice of three different flavors:

- ◆ One using Exif Metadata
- ◆ One using Flash

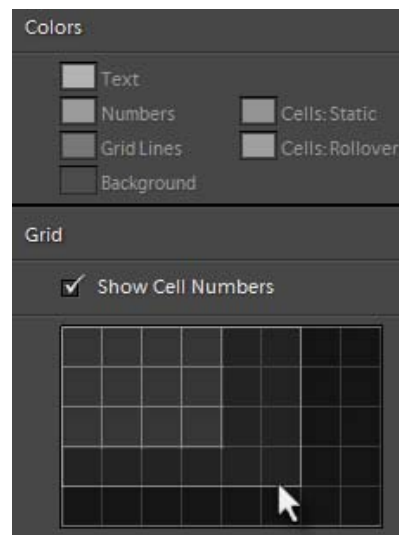
- ◆ and One using good ol' HTML.

Default examples of each are shown below, in their respective order.



Customizing these templates, like I said, is rather limited; but what you 'are' able to do is still pretty nice in function and practice. The options, like everything else are broken into a few categories:

- ◆ Gallery Style (Choose your gallery style, i'm hoping later on this will be further expanded either by offering more templates for download, or allowing you to make your own)
- ◆ Custom Settings (Site title, Collection Title, Contact Info, Colors for each individual element, selective grid to allow you to show more/less images per page ((example below)), maximum size of large preview images)



- ◆ Image Settings (Individually set the title and caption for each image in the gallery)
- ◆ Output (Allows you to preview in your browser, and also enter your ftp/serverpath information to automatically upload and sync to your website straight from Lightroom)

Conclusions

Adobe's Lightroom is really a solid piece of work, and with a little polish, could easily be one of the best native-RAW photo editing software packages on the market; not only in terms of included features or flexibility, but also in the speediness of the application's performance, and its sleek, intuitive interface.

There is a lot more depth to the program, as you get into the advanced export and import options, collection organization, application preferences, syncing options, etc. But for the purposes of this guide, I wanted to introduce you to the interface, and get a first-look at Lightroom and some of its surface-features.

Even in its Beta 4 release, this application is nearly faultless, and incredibly stable. Glitches and snags are to be expected with Beta software releases, but so far my experience with Adobe's Lightroom has been 100% positive. I look forward to Adobe's continued development on this software package, and eagerly await the latest and greatest beta releases to see what else Adobe has in store for us.

You can get your very own Beta copy of Adobe's Lightroom at

<http://labs.adobe.com/technologies/lightroom/>

It's 100% Free for the time being, so get it while you can!

A tutorial-guide created for Kirt Witte's High Dynamic Range Imaging course ∞ Fall Quarter October 2006 ∞ [Savannah College of Art and Design](#)

