

# Adobe Lightroom First Impressions

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Adobe Lightroom, if you haven't yet seen it in action, has got to be the hottest thing this year, perhaps next to the iPhone. Funny, because its rival application is made by Apple (Aperture). I have not had the chance to really review Aperture, but my first impressions of Lightroom just blows me away. There are dozens of articles and introductory tutorials about Lightroom out there already, but I'm going to talk briefly about why I like it, and what kind of misconceptions were running around in my head before I tried it. Lightroom is my first step to finding a good DAM workflow.

When Adobe announced the Beta of Lightroom, I was perhaps like the rest of the industry, confused about what it was supposed to do. I thought, I use Photoshop to do my image editing, what the hell do I need another program for? I couldn't have been more wrong.

Lightroom is to Photoshop as a Hummer is to a sports car. Okay, maybe that was a bad analogy. Let's just get right into it.

With Lightroom, I've found myriad tools which basically make doing nitty-gritty Photoshop work much easier. It can work in tandem with Photoshop, but it is not a pixel-level editing tool. In fact, the reason it makes image editing easier is because it's not a pixel-level editing tool. I must admit though, that these tools would have been great to have in Photoshop in earlier versions, and like the RAW converter, I'm saying, "Well, it's about time."

In brief, Lightroom is the development program, after which you can take the images into Photoshop for further nuances. For instance, you can make overall color changes to an entire image by using sliders or the "target adjustment tool" which has been introduced in other applications for some time already, but Adobe is just now adopting it into Lightroom. The target adjustment tool is a little icon you can press to activate, and then bring the tool over a part of your image, click on a color, and drag an imaginary slider up and down to change ONLY that particular color's hue, lightness, and saturation, independent of all other colors. This is a tremendous benefit to color correcting off-color images.

You can also apply the same adjustments to a whole group of images, in a batch process, but without starting a batch process; just click on all the images on your light table, and use the tool to apply changes to those images in one click.

Furthermore, Lightroom is a sorting, keywording and cataloging tool. One of the neatest features of the keywording aspect is that you can choose one image, write some keywords into the input area, and then use the Stamp tool to stamp the same set of keywords onto every image you see, individually. The interface is very sophisticated, albeit a bit unorthodox in the way you would normally do things. But that is the basis of all progressive technology, to do something in a different way, but which is infinitely easier and less time consuming.

Yet another cool tool is the "turn this adjustment on/off" button on each adjustment area. Essentially, it's an on/off switch and behaves like that graphically. You can make adjustments in a number of different ways, in different panels and then turn each adjustment on and off individually to see their individual or combined effects. If you've ever used the adjustment layers in Photoshop, this is the parallel method in Lightroom, except that you cannot choose specific areas by selecting them with the marquee tool.

In the short time I've been playing with Lightroom, I've become completely enamoured with it's power, it's flexibility, and it's interactivity in regards to seeing editing changes in real time, without hurting your originals. I cannot give you a full review here, but follow this link to a Google video search of Lightroom's abilities which will let you sink your teeth into Lightroom with some decent introductions:

<http://video.google.com/videosearch?q=adobe+lightroom>

Stay tuned for more on Lightroom as I myself delve deeper.