

Adobe® Lightroom™ beta

Questions & Answers

Answers to your questions about Adobe Lightroom

Q: What is Lightroom Beta?

A: Adobe Lightroom Beta is a new, exciting product built from the ground up for professional photographers. It is an efficient, powerful way to import, select, develop and showcase large volumes of digital images. It allows you to spend less time sorting and organizing images, so you have more time to actually shoot and perfect them. The Lightroom Beta program aims to get direct product feedback from the photography community, via our new Adobe Labs web site, so that photographers will have an impact in what Adobe actually ships.

Q: Why Lightroom Beta?

A: To put it simply, Adobe Lightroom is unfinished. We want to make it available to you now, so you can tell us what you like, what you'd like better—so you can help us shape it into the efficient and elegant workflow solution that photographers need. We also recently launched the Adobe Labs web site, as a venue for showcasing and releasing emerging technologies. Lightroom is the first end-user application to be made available through the Adobe Labs web site.

Q: What is Adobe Labs?

A: Adobe Labs is the next generation of Macromedia Labs, which launched in October 2005 to share early technology access with software developers. Now that Macromedia is part of Adobe, Adobe Labs takes on the broader goal of being the source for early looks at emerging products and technologies from Adobe, including Project Lightroom. And not just for developers, but for technology enthusiasts everywhere. Here you can get early access to downloads, samples, documentation, release notes, tutorials and more. You can also ask questions, discuss, and share your feedback with Adobe.

Q: Who will use Lightroom Beta?

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

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

A: Adobe Photoshop CS2 is, and will continue to be, the industry standard in digital image editing. Photoshop will always hold an important place in the pro photographer's toolbox, for detailed image editing and compositing. However, photographers face a variety of workflow concerns beyond image editing. The Adobe Bridge and Camera Raw components of Photoshop CS2 began solving these problems in recent years. Now, Lightroom takes these concepts further, in a very photographer-centric way. Lightroom is also different from Photoshop in terms of its software architecture. Developers and customers have long appreciated the ability to extend Photoshop functionality through third-party plug-ins and scripting support. Lightroom draws on the lessons learned through Photoshop and has been designed from the ground up with a fully modular architecture. All of the tasks you see in Lightroom's main interface—Library, Develop, Slideshow, and Print—are actually independent modules that have full control over your images, and which can use the entire screen to show you just the tools you need for the task at hand.

Q: If Lightroom has a modular architecture, can third parties develop for it?

A: In the future, Adobe will be releasing a developer SDK for Lightroom, so that third parties can create additional modules that extend the application and the workflow in groundbreaking ways.

Q: Does Lightroom replace Adobe Bridge or Camera Raw?

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

Q. Why don't my raw images look the same in Adobe Camera Raw and Lightroom Beta?

A. Lightroom leverages much of the same, core Adobe Camera Raw technology used in Photoshop CS2. We will be addressing these differences later in the beta program.

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

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

Q: What are the system requirements?

A: For Windows®, Adobe Lightroom Beta requires Windows XP with Service Pack 2 (SP2), an Intel Pentium 4 processor, 768 MB of RAM (1 GB recommended), and 1 GB or more free hard drive space, and a monitor with 1,024 x 768 screen resolution. For the Mac OS®, Adobe Lightroom Beta requires Mac OS X version 10.4.3 (Tiger) or higher, a 1GHz or faster PowerPC G4 or G5 processor or Intel Core Duo processor (including iBook G4 or PowerBook G4), and 768 MB of RAM (although more is recommended), and 1 GB or more of free hard drive space.

Q: Why did the Windows version come out later than the one for Mac OS X?

A: The Windows and Mac OS versions of Lightroom are under simultaneous development, but the Mac OS X beta version was ready to be introduced to the public before the one for Windows. The final, packaged versions for both platforms should be released within a few months of each other. As Microsoft is gearing up for a major operating system transition, and since Lightroom is a brand new product from Adobe, we are spending extra time on the Windows side to deliver the best design that will support our Windows customers today, while also building for the future.

Q: Are the features the same in the Windows and Mac OS betas?

A: Not yet. As the Mac OS beta was ready for release first, it is slightly ahead of the Windows version in terms of feature completion. However, the final, released versions of Adobe Lightroom will contain the same features, and deliver the same professional, best-of-class results, no matter which platform you choose to use.

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

A: The concept behind Lightroom is to provide a single environment that has all of the functions photographers most commonly need to perform on their images. But we're not interested in trying to pack all the knobs and switches into Lightroom that a photographer might ever need. The goal of Lightroom is to have the RIGHT knobs and switches, in the cleanest, least cluttered, easiest to use package. It's not about having every tool in the hardware store. It's about having a focused set of features that are just right for photography, are intuitive, powerful, and easy to learn. So yes, it's an image editing tool, *and* it's a workflow productivity tool.

Q: Are there any training materials available?

A: One of the goals of Project Lightroom is to create an application that is so intuitive to use, photographers will be able to focus on their images and not the technology. A basic tenet of the product team is that a new user should be able to get up and running easily after learning no more than five basic rules about a new application. Thus, Lightroom displays its five rules prominently when the application is first launched. Basic information about using Lightroom is contained in the Release Notes available with the product download at Adobe Labs (<http://labs.adobe.com/technologies/lightroom>). There is also a discussion forum accessible via links on the same web page. We encourage you to ask questions and talk about your experiences with Lightroom, as Lightroom product team members will be participating as well.

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

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

Q: When will Lightroom ship?

A: Our current intention is to ship a 1.0 version of Lightroom later this year, but frankly, we're not sure. We are seeking user input so we can be sure we've got it right. Photographer workflows can be varied and complex, and we believe the best solution can only be delivered after extensive input from pro photographers. So download, install, and comment on Lightroom. We'll ship it when you tell us it's ready.

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

A: Because Adobe Lightroom is being built using an entirely new open modular architecture, third-party vendors will be able to develop modules that plug directly into the Lightroom workflow, and work as first-class citizens with the Adobe-built modules. This will enable developers to deliver valuable enhancements and custom workflows for specialized digital photography requirements. After the final product is released, an SDK for Lightroom will be made available..

Q: What file formats will Lightroom support?

A: Over 120 native camera raw file formats, DNG, TIFF and JPEG—in other words, the formats primarily used in digital cameras, and more of them than any other developer. A complete list of manufacturers and models supported in Camera Raw can be found at http://labs.adobe.com/technologies/lightroom/supported_file_formats.html.

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

A: Yes. Adobe is a leader in delivering high-quality, localized versions of its software. Specific languages supported will be announced closer to the release of those versions.

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

A: Adobe Lightroom Beta 3 will expire on January 31, 2007. However, additional beta versions with appropriate expiration dates will be released throughout the life of the project, so that photographers who have come to rely on the beta version will not have an interruption in their ability to use Lightroom.

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

A: The technical term, “beta” software, generally means that the software is feature complete, but not yet fully tested. Adobe Lightroom Beta 3 is actually not yet feature complete, so it is not a beta in the technical sense of the word. However, the general public understands beta to mean “unfinished software that is not yet ready to be shipped,” so we’ve decided to call this a beta. We will finalize the feature set based on the input we receive from you, the people who use it first.

Q: Will Lightroom run on Intel-based Macintoshes?

A: Yes. The Macintosh version of Adobe Lightroom Beta 3 is a Universal application that will run natively both on PowerPC systems and on the new Intel-based Macintoshes.

Q: Will Lightroom run on Windows Vista?

A: Lightroom is being designed and tested for Windows XP, the current Microsoft operating system. Although we are not aware of any reason why Lightroom would not run on Windows Vista, Vista is an unreleased product and we have yet to evaluate final compatibility.