Building 'Real Earth' Videos in Lightroom

Let's take a rather different twist to build an unusual Lightroom video! We're going to use Google Earth and Photoshop CS5 as our working tools.

Google Earth lets you move the camera about Earth's surface at will. If you have a locale where you'd like to shoot from the northeast, it lets you put that camera down near the landscape then shoot. Move the camera around, looking at different dikes, put a few of those images together, and you've become a flying cameraman (oops - camera person); snap the shutter, and you've got an evocative tale.

CS5 lets you skillfully annotate pictures, size all shots to the same shape, and prepare title slides to explain this great adventure.

At this point, you've only got a bunch of still shots. You're trying to tell a dynamic, provocative tale. But, in today's world you need to tell a tale in a short, succinct video on YouTube.

So, how do you create that remarkable video in Lightroom?

Google Earth Screenshots

If you know GPS coordinates for a point of interest, Google Earth will fly you there and put you several miles above the earth's surface. So, you're looking down on the surface from, say, 30 miles in the sky.

But that's not all of what you really want to see; you want to take the camera down and look along one of the dikes that extends outward from Ship Rock in New Mexico. So, you learn how to maneuver that camera where you want it. When you get it positioned just so, you do a screen capture.

But, there's not just *one* dike; there are three. So after you get your first screenshot, swing around and shoot the other two.

Here's where the tremendously exciting fun begins...

    Google Earth will let you create a Placemark. A Placemark lets you move the camera round at will. The picture above is looking north to Ship Rock. I've taken the camera far enough down so you get a sense of the dike on the left while looking directly at an absolutely amazing mathematical reconstruction of Ship Rock.

    A Placemark can contain a hook to a picture and anything you want to say about that picture. I created a special icon for the Placemark consisting of a camera whose lens shows an award-winning shot. Above that picture, I created a description for a Google Earth tour balloon.

    Taken together, the powerful implications of a land shot with an award-winning digital photograph would truly excite any tour leader or nature/landscape photographer! Their immediate reaction; How Can I Get One of These Toys?

    Let's see how we put all these tantalizing components together in Lightroom for an earth-shaking marketing video...
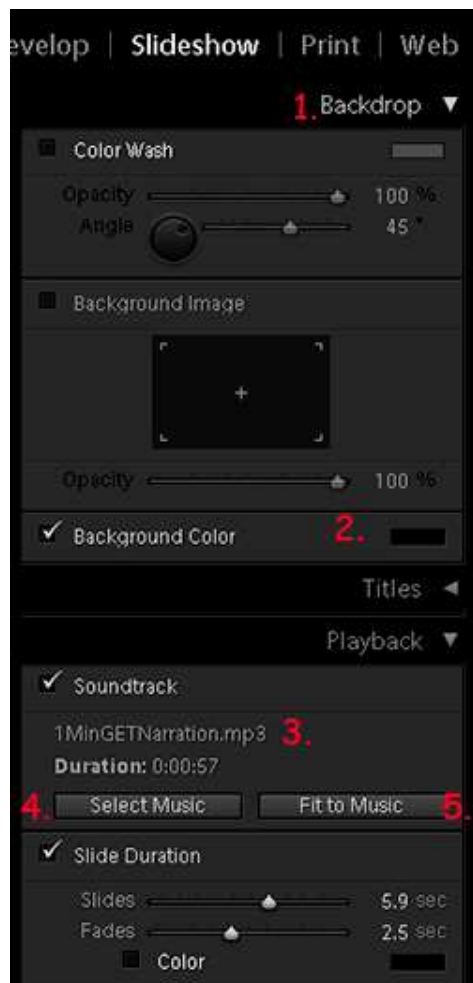
Create 2 Collections within 2011VideoWks
1. VideoStills.
2. VideoWorkflow.

VideoStills contains six processed images from Google Earth and CS5.
VideoWorkflow contains screenshots of Lightroom steps to create a video.
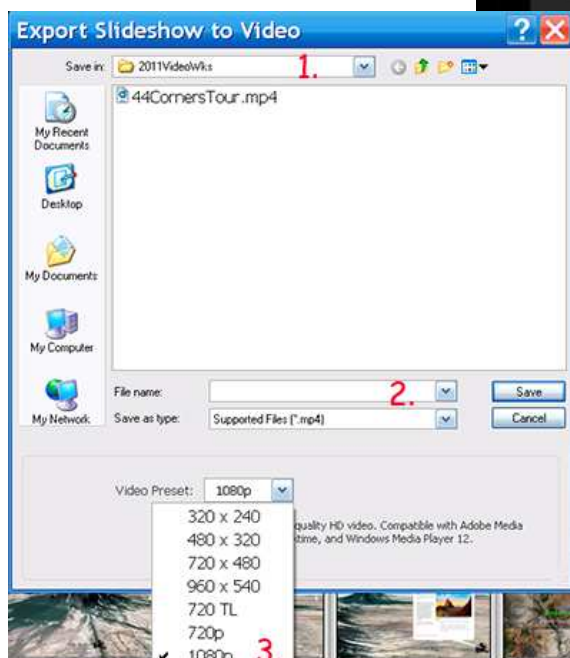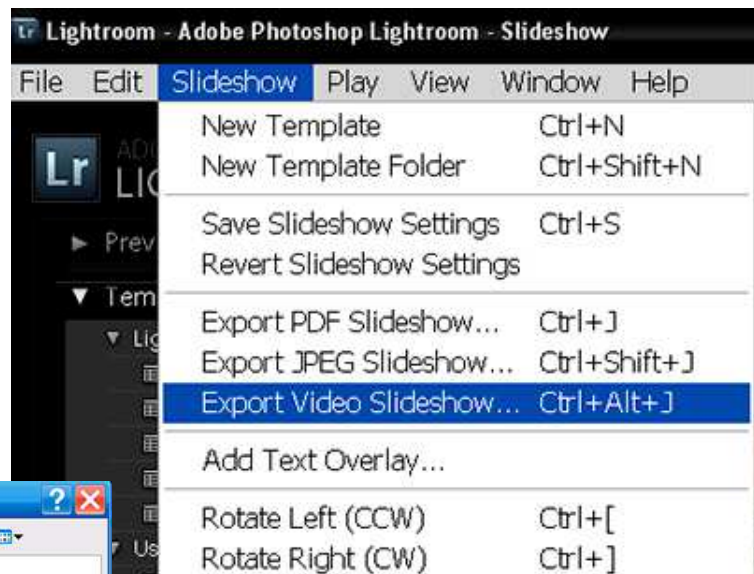
Creating a Video in Lightroom

In Lightroom, click Slideshow module.

1. Open Backdrop by clicking on the flippy triangle.
2. Leave Color Wash and Background Image off - click check mark for Background Color and choose black.
3. Locate my voice narration MP3 file in your appropriate folder.
4. Choose it with Select Music. You're told its 57 seconds in length.
5. Fit to Music. Lightroom adjusts the slide duration to 5.9 seconds with a 2.5 second fade.

Export Video Slideshow

In Lightroom, click Slideshow drop-down menu and select Export Video Slideshow.

This dialog comes up...

1. Choose folder where you want to put the video.
2. Pick a video Name.
3. Pick a size for frame and type of player you want the video to use.

WARNING!

Although I have a dual CPU laptop, Lightroom uses both CPUs, takes quite a while, and can produce large video files.

Nevertheless, for the demo I wanted to be able to play full screen on a 50 inch TV.

So I picked 1080P for high quality video and let 'er rip...

Well, there you have it!

You've collected some still images, annotated them, created an MP3 voiceover, integrated them all in Lightroom, and created a tantalizing one minute video...

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Lightroom Versus Other Video Making Software

Lightroom's not the only software which creates videos.

I've watched a 17-year-old play around on a Macbook Pro in iMovie. Although it was only the first video, I was amazed at the complex versatility that software provided.

Granted, you got to work with CS5 or you won't have a smooth show. But, if you willing to use it, then, as you've seen, Lightroom can produce a professional looking video!

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