Bringing Countless Old Images into a Catalog

Years of creating Photoshop fine art images may undergo several stages. Raw files may exist in a major folder. Color management files may occur in child folders. Final images may occur in competition folders. Growth of Lightroom or Photoshop steps may occur in workflow folders. The missing main catalog element – Lightroom has not created an .lrcat catalog file or previews.

After image development and tone mapping, you really need to get final efforts into Lightroom's main catalog. Our inset is the Import dialog box provided by Lightroom 3. Adobe engineers skillfully help me visualize what's in the folder I'm to bring in. They let me ignore prior efforts. So, I only bring in the latest thing.

We take you through seven steps of importing folder images into a main catalog in Appendix A. Carefully learn each step; Import is very facile and you'll **really** love it!

We address image conversion from a more casual folder level. Here are steps to create a final single integrated catalog.
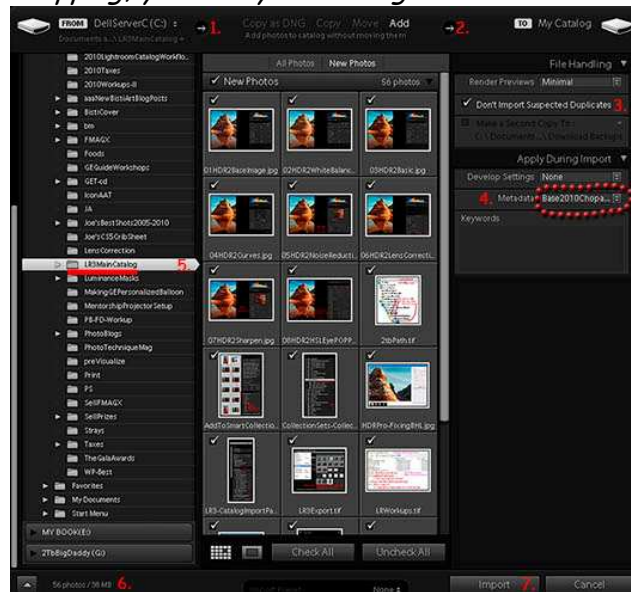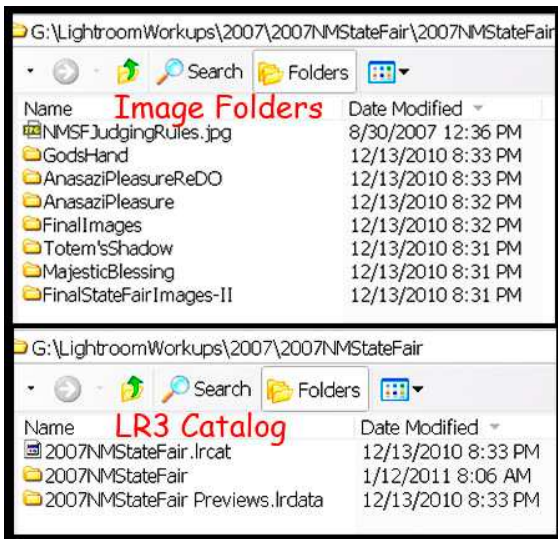
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Image Folders and LR3 Catalog

Most early shoots involved evolving Photoshop work. You shot images, then developed them. In my case, I began shooting raw about 2006.

Folder after folder evolved. Images reached mature stages – although only as mature as your photography path of that time.

In 2010, I might want to find an image which won a State Fair Ribbon 2007. But, with many thousand images, that might take a few hours. So, it was time to consolidate.

I chose Lightroom 3. LR3 lets me see each image. It puts any changes in a catalog database. It applies copyrights and keywords to each image. It has excellent, rapid search functions.

Most importantly – it lets me quickly find an important image when a client calls. Then, we decide what is required, print the image, and it appears on a hallowed wall!

The upper image shows our 2007NMStateFair folder. Five folders contain images. Two folders have development images. Clearly, early process choices might not win juried competitions. So, a 2nd development occurred.

The lower image includes a basic, local LR3 catalog file called .lrcat. It has all steps to develop each entry image using LR3 and CS5. The .lrdata file contains previews of all images in this local catalog.

Collections Built on Laptop

Much of my work occurs on a laptop. To prepare a local catalog, I follow several steps. *Real World Adobe Camera Raw for CSx* (Fraser & Schewe) and *The Adobe Photoshop Lightroom 3 book for Digital Photographers* (Kelby) teach workflows.

In LR3, Collections simulate Windows folders – but extend uses much farther. Here, 2007NMStateFair is a Collection Set. *Anasazi Pleasure* is a Collection containing image workup which created an award-winning image. This screenshot shows not only Collection structure, but *Anasazi Pleasure* as well. I use this same Collection structure to create consistent workflow.

Apply Copyrights and Keywords

Here's the meat…

While still in a working Laptop catalog, I make sure the image has a copyright.

Copyrights are created as .lrtemplates and contain specific data. You might really use this data if someone feels your image is 'free' from the net.
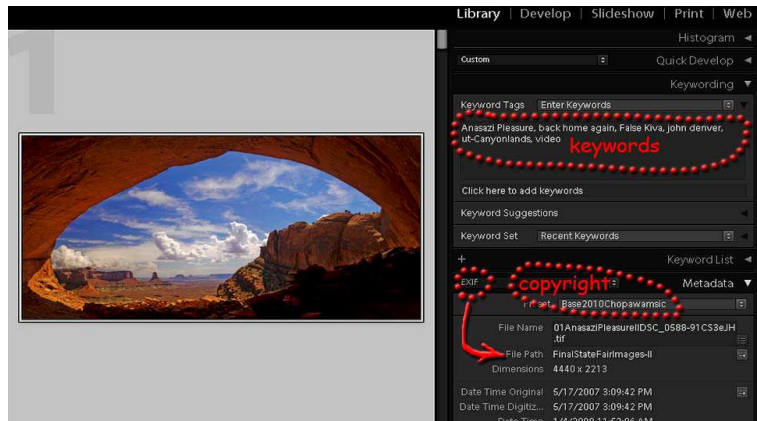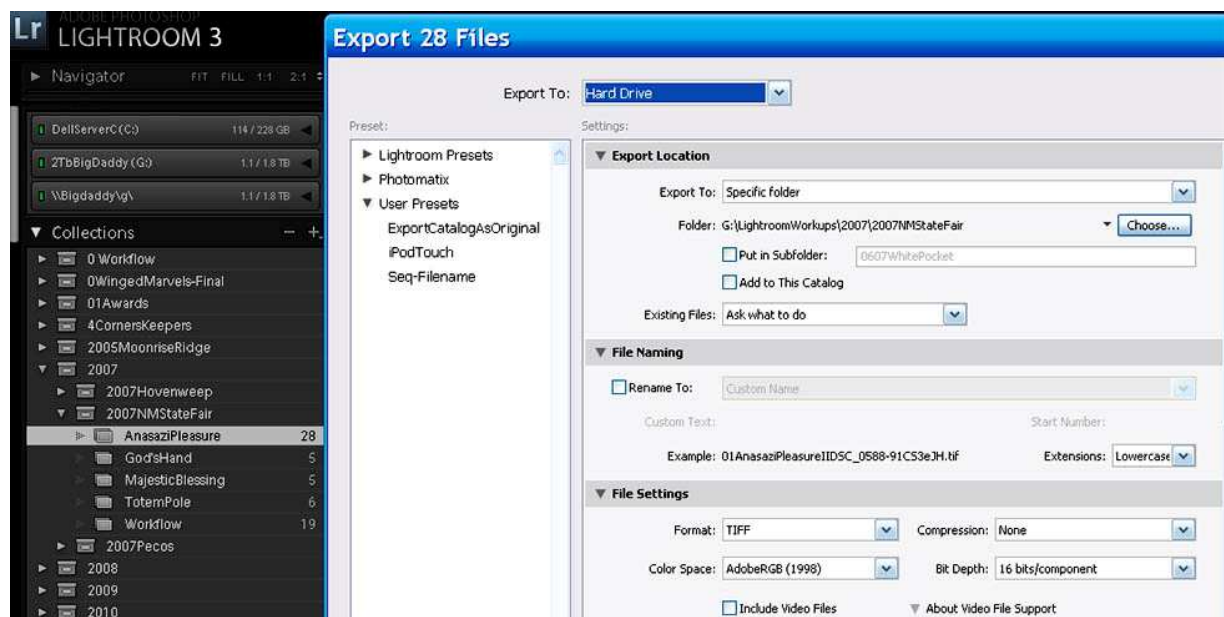
Then, looking at the image, I include a limited set of keywords.

Keywords are a critical step ::: here's how you find the darn thing several years later. I use a simple keyword format for this step; where, when, who, what, and why. Later, as images gain credence, I might include award, publish, endorse, etc…

An example appears above, encircled in red dots!

Export Well-Defined Catalog

Export Catalog is somewhat more subtle than our preceding menus. <mark>LR3 Engineers managed to hide many skilled choices under dropdown menus. I suggest you experiment; make a point to work with *each* and *every* one of these menu items. Then, they become your fast friends.</mark>

For example, I only recently found a hidden checkmark. It's shown above as 'Include Video Files'.

Transfer Exported Catalog to External Drive

Transfer can happen many ways. I use an Ethernet network between laptop and studio computers. So, it's a simple matter to take the exported catalog then copy to external HD hooked to studio computer.

You may choose another method as your 'rows' path to your main catalog. For example, use a palm-sized external drive for transport.

Import New Catalog to Central Catalog

When you are ready to Import, you can do so from LR3. But, you are in the wrong catalog. Open Recent lets you choose LightroomCentral.

With ReLaunch, Import dialog opens.

Import is one really *neat* feature of LR3. First, it lets you see all photos to import. Next, you can only choose New

Photos. You search for folder name then images magically appear. Then, it decides where your photos belong. Here, there is a catalog folder 2007NMStateFair. It's in folder 2007, in LightroomWorkups, on a 2tb External Drive.
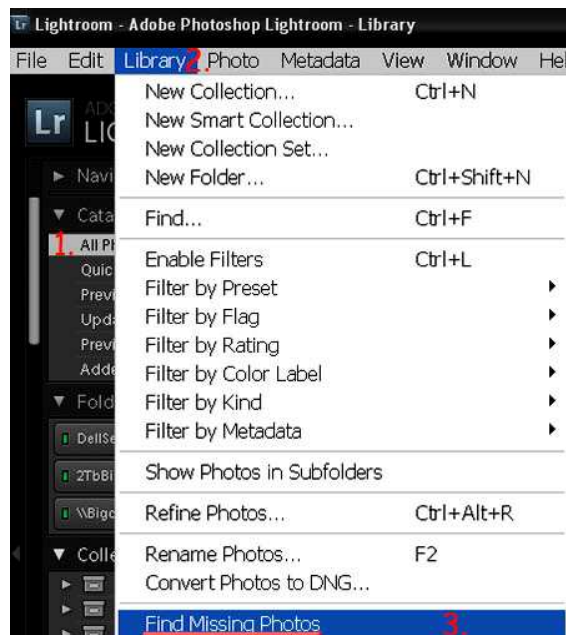
Metadata File Path and File Name

LR3 stores the folder name and file type in the Metadata field.

Since this information was stored in the laptop catalog, probably on drive C, images can't be found in the main catalog. They are 'missing'!

Fortunately, LR3 engineers created a 2nd 'neat' feature. Using Library function, you can ask LR3 to find all Missing Photos using the main catalog.
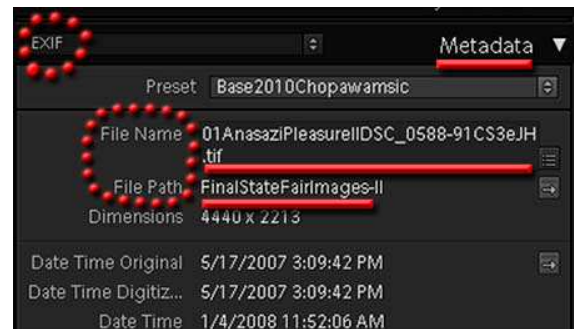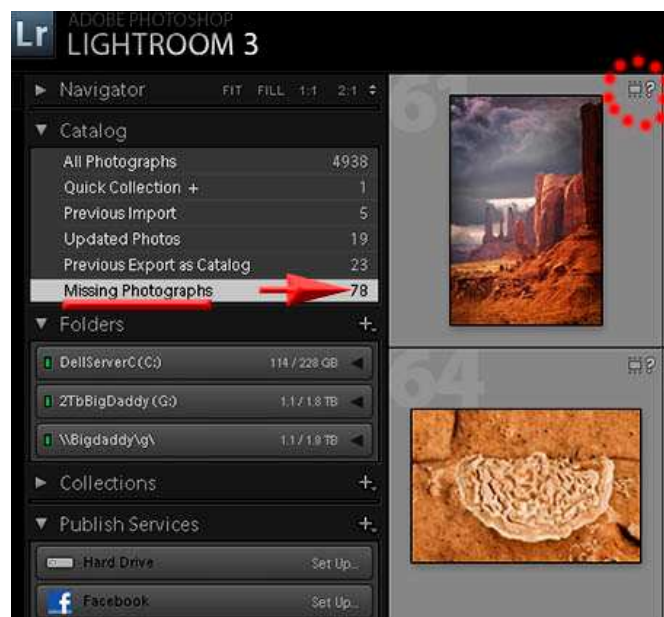

'Fix' Missing Photos Caused by Export

Here, 78 photos are missing.

But, you simply click on **Question Mark** (circled) and LR3 lets you 'easily' find these photos.

Locate pops up.

Simply choose All Photos in the main catalog. Click Library, then choose Find Missing Photos.

Presto chango – your chariot awaits.

Finding Missing Photos

Missing Photo LOCATE
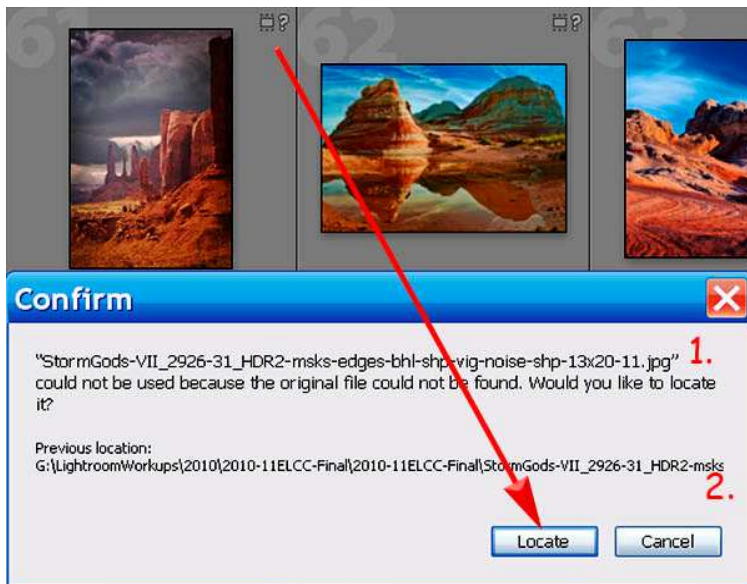
The top line of **Locate** (1) tells you the file name. The bottom line tells you the prior folder location (2).

Our **Question Mark** means you moved something using Windows and it got lost. LR3 works best when you move things from one Folder to another in LR3.

But, you can recover!

Open LightroomWorkups and search for 'StormGods-VII...'.

When you find it, go to that folder, choose that specific file name, click on the **Include Missing Photos**.⬭

Presto Chango – LR3 finds bunches of those seemingly missing photos!

Now, you've successfully converted an old folder of images into a catalog, then incorporated that catalog into the main catalog. The new collections contain all the keywords and metadata necessary to quickly find that vital image...

If you need more help, simply follow detailed steps in appendix A.

Conclusions

So – you've got 25,000 old un-cataloged photos...

With these keys to separate workup photos, you can catalog each separately. LR3 lets you move impeccably from one catalog to another. Believe it or not – this process works just like your mind. Do a bit one day. Then another.

Finally, collect all this effort into a main catalog.

Now, you reach ever so much higher... competitions, eBooks, videos, workshops, galleries, tours – all from quick finds of highly polished fine art! Then, their inclusion in Internet marketing efforts which dazzle others...
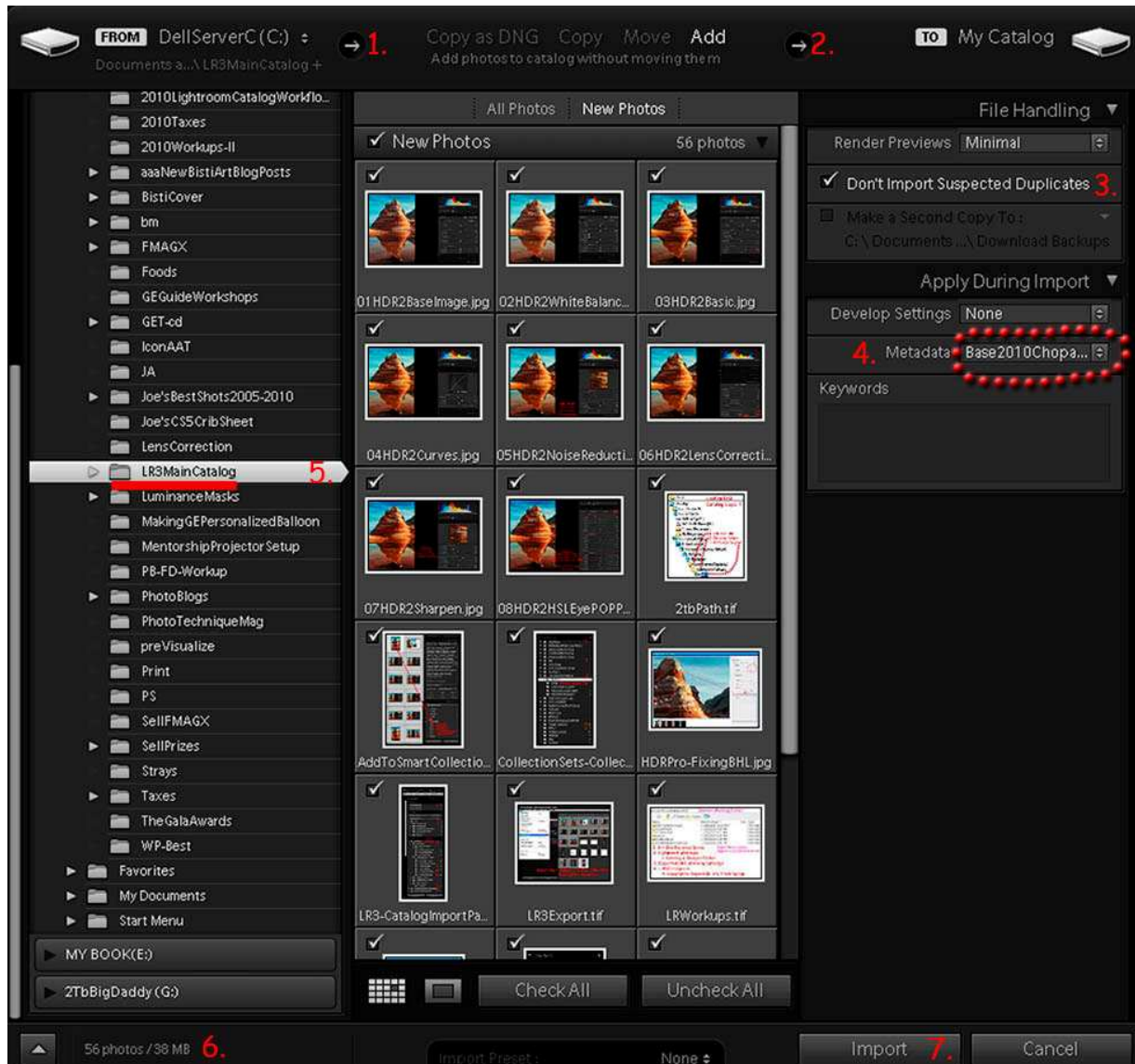
Fancy – Smancy…

This good gal needs to become a very welcome friend. The combo of sleek visual and technical info lets you perform many facilitated functions when importing images etc.

Strong visual aids really simplify the process for me. After all, I see things much quicker than I read or hear them...

In the following discussion, we're going to carefully lead you through Import steps so you become very facile.

First

Decide where the new folder is. In this case, it's on the laptop on C drive. Once I find the proper folder, LR3 quickly shows me new photos in that folder.

Second

But, I've got a decide where to put them. The four options are:

Copy As DNG, Copy, Move, Add

In this case, I simply want to Add them to the catalog but leave them where they are.

Third

Don't Import Suspected Duplicates. When this box is checked, I won't see a picture if information already exists in the catalog database on that image.

Fourth

Presuming you are ready prepared a copyright template, simply select the template reflecting the year work was done.

Fifth

Choose the folder which has not yet been cataloged.

Sixth

LR3 promptly tells you how many photos and how much space are going to take. If you're a nerd, this'll come in quite handy.

Seventh

Simply click the button to import these particular 56 photos.

Hey, that's really all there is to this important step...

Appendix B - Detailed Steps from Local Folder to Integrated Main Catalog

Several catalogs were recently created from files shot and processed in 2007. Here are required steps:

1. Locate an older working folder containing PSD, tif, and jpg files.
2. Create a new Catalog in that folder ~ 2007NMStateFair.
3. Import all images into that new, yet separate catalog
    a. <u>Insert copyright</u> during import.
    b. <u>Add keywords</u> to prioritize future searches.
    c. Build appropriate <u>Collection Sets</u> and <u>Collections</u>.
        i. Since this import is from a laptop, paths to underlying images ONLY reflect the laptop drive.
        ii. When this catalog is exported to the main external drive folder, Missing Photos occur. A new path is needed…
        iii. Fortunately, Lightroom has a simple solution, outlined below.
    d. Delete any PSD/tif files which represent old style workup – (e.g., in olden days, I kept *each* layer change as a separate yet growing PSD).
4. **Export** 2007NMStateFair to
   G:\LightroomWorkups\2007\2007NMStateFair
    a. G is currently a 2 tb external hard drive.
    b. Check
        i. Export negative files.
        ii. Include available previews.
5. In LR3, Open Recent, and choose Lightroom.
6. Each catalog is imported to a common catalog ~ LightroomWorkups.
    a. Opens Folder to Import.
    b. Select .lrcat file.
    c. Brings up dialog.
    d. Choose File Handling – Add new photos to catalog without moving.
    e. Click **All Folders** and **Check All**.
    f. Click **Show Preview**.
    g. Click **Import**…
    h. Puts photos in LightroomWorkups by year and local catalog
7. Select All - Drag & Drop on **0 Workflow** Smart Collection / Current Work.
    a. Checks all newly imported images for **No Keywords**.
    b. Or **No Copyright**.
    c. Correct any missing keyword or copyright elements.
8. Check for **Missing Photos**
    a. **Missing Photos** are shown by a CHECK MARK in upper right corner.

b. Right Click on checkmark for **Missing Photo**.
  i. Get filename for missing photo.
  ii. Get tentative location for missing photo.
c. Click **Locate**.
  i. Takes you to Windows Folder where file is supposed to be.
  ii. Look around until you actually locate file.
  iii. When filename in dialog, check **Find Nearby Missing Photos**.
  iv. This *important* step locates other photos moved to new location…

9. **Backup each** new addition to main catalog backup ~ LightroomCentral!
 a. Check catalog database integrity.
 b. Optimize catalog.

A fluid understanding of basic Windows / Mac system folder structure and associated file transfer (drag and drop) facilitates central catalog database construction and use.