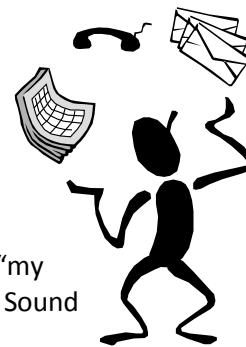


Lightroom... Getting Organized!

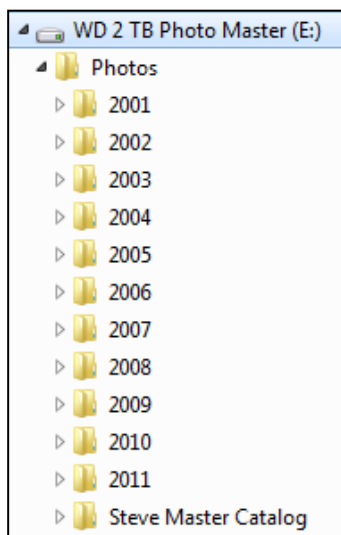
One of the biggest advantages to using LR has nothing to do with the software itself! Rather, in order to effectively use LR, you have to wrangle your photo library under control.

Many photographers have their images scattered all over the place. They have some in the “my pictures folder”, some on the “desktop”, some on CD/DVD, some on an external hard drive. Sound familiar? So before you go any further, you need to lasso these images into one place.

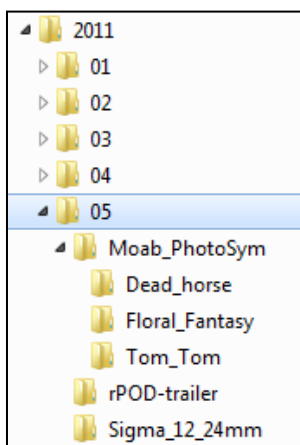


First, create **one master folder**. Read that again... create **ONE** master folder. **All** your photos will live in this folder. Don't name it “My Pictures” as other software may want to write to that folder. Name it something like “Photo Master” or whatever tickles your pixels.

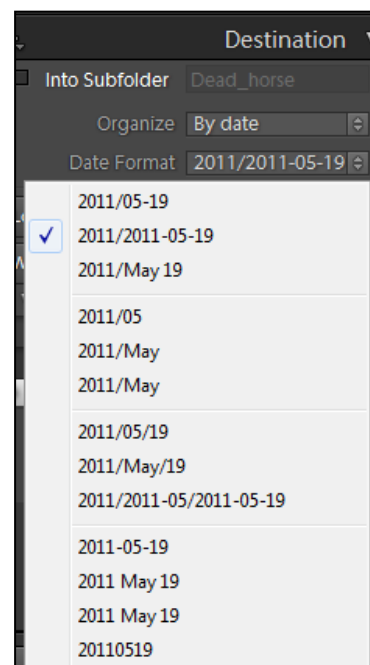
Ideally, you would have two large external hard drives. One as your primary drive and one as backup. Alternatively, you could use your existing internal hard drive as the primary, and just get one external for your backup. This is not as good though as your internal drive is usually not that large and is filling up with other stuff. Sooner than later, it will be too small and then you're going to have to do something else anyway. If your desktop computer has space for a 2nd internal hard drive, then that is a good solution (and the one I use). You can get a 2 TB internal hard drive for less than \$100 which will hold many years of photography. It is pretty easy to install a 2nd internal drive, or you can have someone come to your house and do it for about \$75. A 2 TB external hard drive is about \$100 to \$125. No sense buying smaller than 2 TB drives. Don't even think about not having that 2nd Backup drive!!



So, on your Primary drive, you have created this Master Folder. Now, start moving all your photo folders to this drive by dragging and dropping. You are going to have sub-folders under the Master Folder. It is completely up to you how you organize these sub-folders. For myself, I use a year and month structure, as shown. When I get back from a shoot, I have LR create a folder with the name of the shoot, underneath the month I shot it.



Many photographers organize the subfolders by date and let LR do that during import. You can see the various possible formats to the right.



Once you get all your photos living underneath your Master Folder, then you must back this up to your second hard drive.

You should use software that automatically backs up your Primary drive to your Backup drive. I am on a PC and use one called “Backup4All”. I use the “mirror” function to automatically make the Backup drive a “mirror copy” of the Primary. So whether I add or delete a photo from the Primary, the Backup drive will reflect those changes. My Mirror copy runs every day at midnight. A RAID drive system would work too.

At this point, you are ready to “ingest” all your photos into LR. You are not moving the photos, only “adding” them to the LR catalog. Depending on how many photos you have, this could take several hours, or several days! So you might want to do this when you are going away for the weekend to take new photos!