Digital

A monthly column by Harry

This column is for existing Adobe Photoshop Lightroom version 2 (LR) users. Similar features may exist in Adobe Photoshop; perhaps Trevor could comment. This column is about speeding up the process of developing images. It assumes you are familiar with the basics of using LR and want to access more advanced features (for basic tutorials go to http://www.adobe.com/support/photoshoplightroom/?trackingid=DYNQF . Questions and comments to harry.iris@usa.net.

How can I "develop" an image more quickly in LR?

Do you want to spend less time on the computer or maybe you want to get through the basic adjustments quickly and move on to the more interesting stuff? LR helps in various ways. Among other options, you can make Develop adjustments to one image and then apply the same adjustments to other images that you select (called "synchronizing"). This is very useful, but let's look at a more general approach.

LR can store a series of mouse clicks and keystrokes as a "Preset" and then apply the series to one or more images with just one mouse click. I will discuss presets in the Develop module although there are presets in other modules too. As a very simple, but surprisingly effective, example I have a preset that just changes the exposure by -0.67 (2/3 of a stop). I need this because I generally overexpose by 1/3 of a stop in the camera but I need to drop the exposure a bit, in LR, to avoid burnt-out areas. (See my "Expose to the right" column.) It may not seem like much but I get really tired of mousing over to the exposure slider and clicking and typing "-.67" in the little box beside the slider. Now I just mouse over to the LR list of presets (near the top of the left Develop panel) and click on the preset I called "expose -2/3".

LR presets can be more complex. For example, I have one that I apply to most of my landscape images. It contains an adjustment to seven development settings that I think gives a better starting point for adjusting a landscape image. Some presets come with LR and they can make major changes to your images including a variety of ways to convert to monochrome. Presets can be downloaded to get special effects, e.g. http://www.adobe.com/cfusion/exchange/index.cfm?s=5&from=1&o=desc&cat=281&l=-1&event=productHome&exc=25http://www.adobe.com/cfusion/exchange/index.cfm?s=5&from=1&o=desc&cat=281&l=-1&event=productHome&exc=25 . (I've put installation instructions here on the Club Flickr site.)

Once you have a preset, you can apply it automatically to every image you import by selecting the preset in the "Develop Settings" box in the Import Photos dialogue box. Having some basic development done automatically may make it easier to select or reject images at the next stage in the workflow.

To create your own preset, open any image in the Develop module. Adjust the image as usual making the change(s) that you want in your preset: let's make Camera

Calibration "Camera Landscape", Clarity 80 and Vibrance 20. Check that the changes are correct in the History.

Click the + sign to the right of "Presets" in the left-hand panel. The "New Develop Preset" dialogue box appears. Type in a name like "Landscape Basic". Leave the folder as "User". (If you have a large collection of presets, it's convenient to organize them into folders but we're not at that stage yet.) Uncheck all the little boxes except the one(s) we want, in this example check only Clarity, Vibrance and Calibration. Now click the "Create" button. The new preset will appear in the Presets pane.

Check your preset by loading another image into the Develop module and clicking on the name of your new preset. The adjustments you saved in the preset will be applied to the new image.

Simple presets are useful and easy to make and it's fun to check out the more complex presets available on the Web.