



Bridge vs. Lightroom

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In this lesson, we're going to look at the differences between Adobe Bridge and Adobe Lightroom. Both of these programs can be used for previewing your photographs. Bridge is generally used in conjunction with Adobe Camera Raw (ACR), while Lightroom handles the tasks of both Bridge and ACR combined. As I mention in the video, it's no secret that I am biased toward Lightroom but I will present the features, pros and cons of each as objectively as possible!

Bridge pros & cons

Pros: One of the main advantages of using Bridge is that you can view images that are not photographs. This includes PDFs, Illustrator files, InDesign files, etc. Bridge also doesn't have a problem working with images that are stored on a network hard drive, where multiple people can access the content.

Cons: Over time, I've noticed a lot of somewhat irritating quirks in Bridge that never get fixed from one version to the next. (Ex: The behavior of the folder structure panel on the left side of the interface. Usually, a disclosure triangle next to a folder indicates that there are subfolders. In Bridge, however, sometimes there are random disclosure triangles on folders that don't reveal any subfolders inside.) Another issue is the small preview size for PDFs. When I click on a PDF to view it full-screen, it only looks like a slightly enlarged thumbnail while it *should* take up the whole window. When using the search field, it is very slow to turn up results, so it's actually faster to just search for things using the Finder in the operating system. Bridge also won't update a photo's keywords when you make changes to the Keyword list.

When I use Bridge: Even though I prefer Lightroom to Bridge, there are a few instances when I would opt to use Bridge. Those are:

- When I need to view files that are not photos
- When I need to view photos that I don't want to be saved long term. (Ex: someone else's photos)
- To strip keywords from an image before importing it into Lightroom, so they don't clutter up my keyword list in Lightroom
- To quickly rename files

Lightroom pros & cons

Pros: In Lightroom, when you import your images, it imports previews that are stored in the catalog. These previews are available even when the hard drive containing the images is not attached to your computer. In addition to this, you have the option of including Smart Previews, which allow you to actually adjust your images when the hard drive containing them is not connected.

In Lightroom, you only see the folders that you choose to have in the catalog. Unless you import a folder from your hard drive into Lightroom, it will not show it within Lightroom's Folders panel. This makes for a much cleaner view of your folders.

In Bridge, you can only view the contents of one folder at a time. With Lightroom, you can select more than one folder and view the combined contents. Also, there will be a number next to the name of the folders that indicates how many images are stored within each folder.

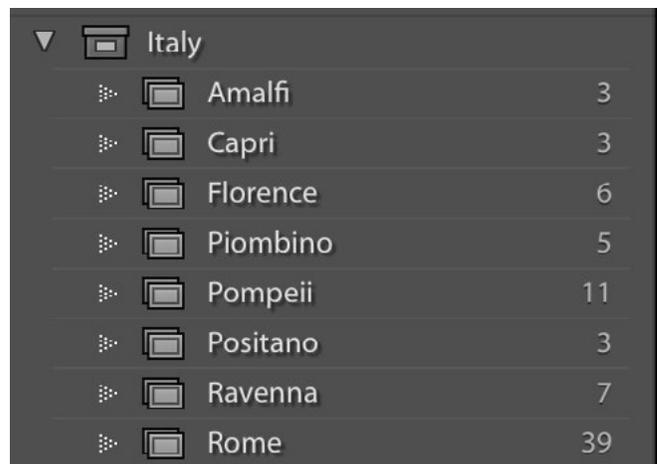
If I want to put together a collection of images, Lightroom has a feature just for that, conveniently called "Collections." A single collection can contain images from multiple folders. Bridge has this feature as well, but what Bridge doesn't have (that Lightroom has) is Collection Sets. A Collection Set is a way to create sub-collections, similar to subfolders. In other words, you can have a multi-level hierarchal system when it comes to your Collections.

When you update a keyword in Lightroom's keyword list, all of the images tagged with that keyword will be updated with that change. I also love Lightroom's ability to very quickly search a huge number of images.



Italy - Florence	138
Italy - Piombino	56
Italy - Pompeii	152
Italy - Positano	18
Italy - Ravenna	117

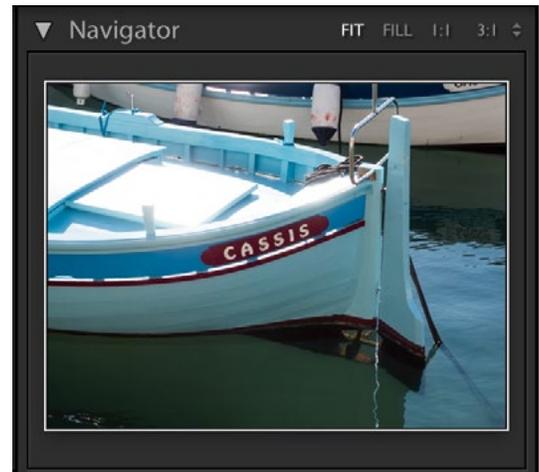
In Lightroom, the number next to the folder name indicates how many images are inside.



Italy	
Amalfi	3
Capri	3
Florence	6
Piombino	5
Pompeii	11
Positano	3
Ravenna	7
Rome	39

Above, you can see a Collection Set (Italy) with several Collections within it.

Lightroom's History Panel lists a history of all the adjustments made to the picture and this history is never cleared (even after you quit and restart Lightroom). If you have the Navigator window in view while hovering your cursor over the different states in the History Panel, you will see a preview of what the image looked like at that state. If you click on an item in the list, it will revert your image back to that state. A similar feature can be found within the Presets Panel. As you hover your cursor over the different preset names, the Navigator Panel will show you what the image would look like with that preset applied.



Lightroom's Navigator Panel will show you previews of your selected image when you hover over History states and Develop Presets.

In Lightroom's Quick Develop Panel (in the Library Module), you can select multiple images and make changes to different settings so that they will each be adjusted relatively to where they already were. In other words, if you select multiple images and then bump up the exposure by one stop, the image with an exposure setting of 0 will get an exposure setting of 1 and the image with an exposure setting of .5 will get an exposure setting of 1.5.

Camera Raw can not handle layered Photoshop files, but Lightroom can. You can even reopen it in Photoshop and make additional changes. When you save it, those changes will be reflected back in Lightroom.

Lightroom has a feature called Virtual Copies, which allow you to have multiple versions of an image with different settings attached to them. You will still only have one original file on your hard drive.

Lightroom has a more elegant system for exporting your images. You can also create export presets so that you can create different presets for different uses (email, web, print, etc.). If you have a Smart Preview attached to a picture, you can even export it at lower resolution, without the hard drive containing it being attached.

The Publish Services Panel gives you several different methods of quickly exporting and sharing your images to destinations like Facebook, other social media

sites, or a folder on your hard drive. If you use the publish services for Facebook, Lightroom will even keep track of comments made to the photo.

The experience in the Print Module is very convenient and efficient to use. Just like you can save export presets, you can save print templates. You can also save your photos in a special collection called a Print Collection where you can specify a set of print settings to be used on images added to that collection.

Lightroom Mobile allows you to use Lightroom on your phone and/or iPad and the settings will sync with the desktop version.

Cons: Once you import your images, you should not make changes to those images outside of Lightroom. All changes should be initiated inside of Lightroom. If you move them via your operating system, Lightroom will get confused as it won't know where the image is. When you move an image or folder within Lightroom, the change will be reflected on your hard drive.

The Lightroom catalog can take up a lot of space on your hard drive. This doesn't bother me too much because, even though my catalog file is 4.6 Gig, it's managing over 200,000 images. The Lightroom Previews file takes up an even larger amount of space on your hard drive.

Lightroom doesn't support the psb (photoshop big) file format. If your files go above a certain size (2g for psd, 4 gig for tiff), they are turned into the psb format. To get around this, I'll create a flattened version of these files so that they can be imported into Lightroom.