

CIOS 258 TW1 Lesson Outline Week 3

9/27	10/04	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cameras these days work to prevent you from making mistakes, the easy modes and program modes are set to work most of the time. In order to learn to control your camera you need to make it so that it does not take pictures correctly. Create photographs that document and show the following common errors. Post the photographs to the course web log. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Subject Blur/Partially Blurry Photographs 2. Motion Blur/Totally blurry photographs 3. Depth of Field/Wrong plan of focus 4. Over exposure/Washed out 5. Under exposure/Too Dark 6. Incorrect White Balance balance/Wrong color 2. AND: You will be given a handout listing common photographic scenarios. You will describe the photographic problem and then recommend appropriate settings to your camera to meet the photographic problems. You will turn in the handout next class. This assignment will summarize and consolidate your camera skills. 	400	40
------	-------	---	-----	----

Lesson Outline

1. Questions and review of last class
2. Photographic Scenario Handout
3. Photography Sites of the Week
4. Videos of the Week
5. Importing and Archiving
6. Cataloging and Tagging
7. Selecting, Ranking, and Sequencing
8. Creating Projects and Sets,
9. Archiving
10. A review of photo-editing tasks
11. Photo Walk to Noble, Gaffney, and Lacey Photo Walk.

Selecting, Evaluating, and Archiving Photographs: (My photographs are everywhere, how do I get organized?)

Purpose

If you do not organize your photographs you will be overwhelmed? If you do not develop a method of organizing your photographs you could lose the photographs and the memories that they contain. Sometimes what you see, later in a photograph, is different from and maybe even better than your original intention. It is important to make your photographs accessible and easy to view. A good organizing and archiving system provides a method to think about and re-experience and re-evaluate your photographs. It is important to see your photographs from different contexts and perspectives, a photograph and grow and change as your experiences change. If you do not have a method or selecting, grouping, and archiving photographs you will not be able to grow and re-appreciate your photographs.

Questions!

- How do I organize my photographs on my hard disk?
- How do I keep track of the different versions of my photographs?
- How do I keep my photographs safe?
- How do I review and look at my photographs?
- How do I provide access to my photographs so I can “re-experience” them?
- How do I select the photographs to keep and the photographs to delete?
- How do I select the good photographs from the ordinary and the bad?
- How do I distinguish between the photographs that provide documentation and the photographs that have aesthetic value? What is the difference?
- How do I find the photographs that I want?
- How do I group my photographs for different purposes?

- How do I decide which photographs to share?
- How do I store my finished projects?
- If my computer crashes or my house is burglarized will my photographs be safe?
- When the technology changes what will happen to my photographs?
- What file formats should I use when I save my photographs?
- What software should I use to select, evaluate, and archive my photographs?
- What is the difference between tagging and ranking?
- How do I sequence my photographs to tell a story or create an experience?
- What will happen to my photographs in thirty years?

Concepts

- File Formats
- EXIF and Metadata
- Transferring Files
- Selecting images for different purposes
- Evaluating images by using multiple criteria
- Grouping photographs for different purposes
- Ranking photographs
- Tagging photographs
- Sequencing photographs
- Backing up and archiving photographs

Importing and Archiving

File Formats

- JPEG, RAW, TIFF, DNG

Memory Cards

- Compact Flash, Secure Digital, XD, Memory Stick

Transferring from the camera to the computer

- USB Card Reader, USB Connection between camera and computer

Organizing using the computer file system

- My Pictures, Folder Structure, Date

Importing into an organizing tool

- Selecting Folders for import and updating
- Adobe Bridge, Adobe Photoshop Elements (The Organizer), Picasa, many others

Cataloging and Tagging

Grouping and Tagging

- Tagging for multiple purposes.

Organizing Concepts

- Time
- Location
- Subject
- Project
- Theme
- Content
- Audience
- Quality
- Technical
- Other!

Saving Tagging Information to the Files

Selecting, Ranking, and Sequencing

Evaluating

- **Cycle of Yes, No, Maybe many times!**

Sequencing

- **Organizing for presentation, by time, by location etc.**
- **Exporting into working group**
- **Archiving Current Projects**

Creating Projects and Sets,

- **Editing Images**
- **Saving or Exporting for Different Purposes**
- **Sharing**
 - **Print, the web, Blogging, Flickr, etc.**

Archiving for the future

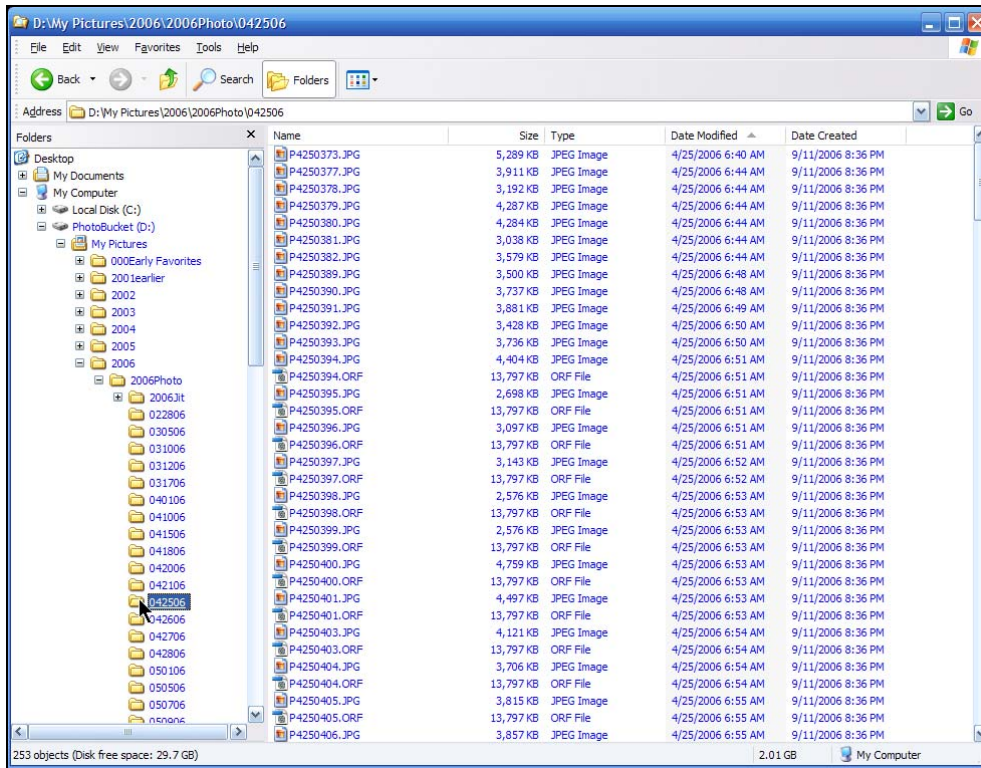
- **Original Files**
- **Current Projects**
- **Completed Projects**
- **Backing up and protecting.**
- **On Site and Off Site Archiving**

My workflow and the tools I use

- **My Hard Disks**
 - C: Disk for Applications and Lightroom Catalogs
 - D: Disk for Current Year and Current Projects
 - E: Disk for Archive of Current Year, Current Projects, and Finished Projects
 - F: Disk for Previous years files and completed projects/ Have a duplicate disk at a different location
 - At the end of each year re-organize the hard disks and make sure they are current.
 - Use small hard disk to transfer from different computers. I use it for Current Projects and Current year archive.
- **Operating System Folders by Year and Date of Import**
- **Current Project Folder by Year**
- **Finished Project Folder by Year**
- **Copy to hard disk using yearly and date folder system**
- **Always have at least two copies and keep it current!!!!**
- **Import into and Organizing, Tagging, Selecting, and Sequencing**
 - **Photoshop Lightroom**
 - **Picasa**
 - **I no longer use these tools, but they still can be useful**
 - **Photoshop Bridge**
 - **Adobe Elements**
- **SyncBack or copy to External Hard Disk**
 - **Archiving to CD or DVD? (Obsolete)**
 - **On-line Backup (Maybe in the future or for small archives)**

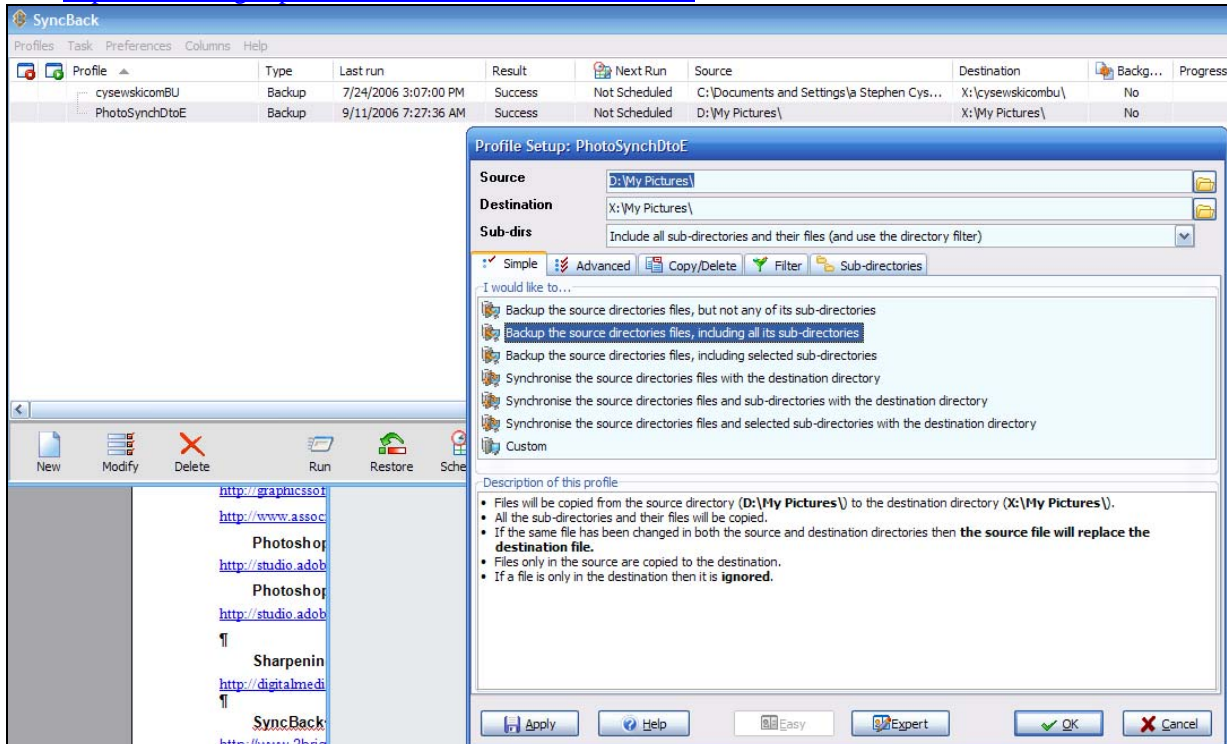
- **Selecting**
 - **Culling**
 - **Rotating**
 - **Rough tagging**
 - **Backing up or archiving**
- Reviewing, enjoying, and reflecting**
 - **Slide Show Mode or Full Screen Preview**
- Rough Editing and Preliminary Sharing Picasa or Elements**
 - **Let it season and then review again**
- **Editing**
 - **Picassa for Ad Hoc Editing and Sharing)**
 - **Photoshop Lightroom**
 - **Photoshop Camera Raw and Photoshop**
 - **Picnik**
 - **Photoshop Express**
 - **Photoshop Elements (Album)**
- **Sharing**
 - **Flickr Uploader**
 - **Picasa Albums**
 - **Dreamweaver for web site**
 - **Blogging**
 - **Email**
- My Selection System**
 - **First Pass**
 - **Yes**
 - **No**
 - **Maybe**
 - **Slide Show**
 - **Second Pass (ranking)**
 - **Yes**
 - **Maybe Yes**
 - **Maybe No**
 - **Slide Show**
 - **Third Pass**
 - **Best**
 - **Good**
 - **Maybe**
 - **No**
 - **Slide Show**
 - **Selecting and re-selecting**
 - **Export to Current Project Folder**
 - **Sequencing and re-selecting**
 - **Previewing and re-selecting**
 - **Archive in Final Project Folder**

Organizing My Photographs on the Hard Disk using the Windows Operating System

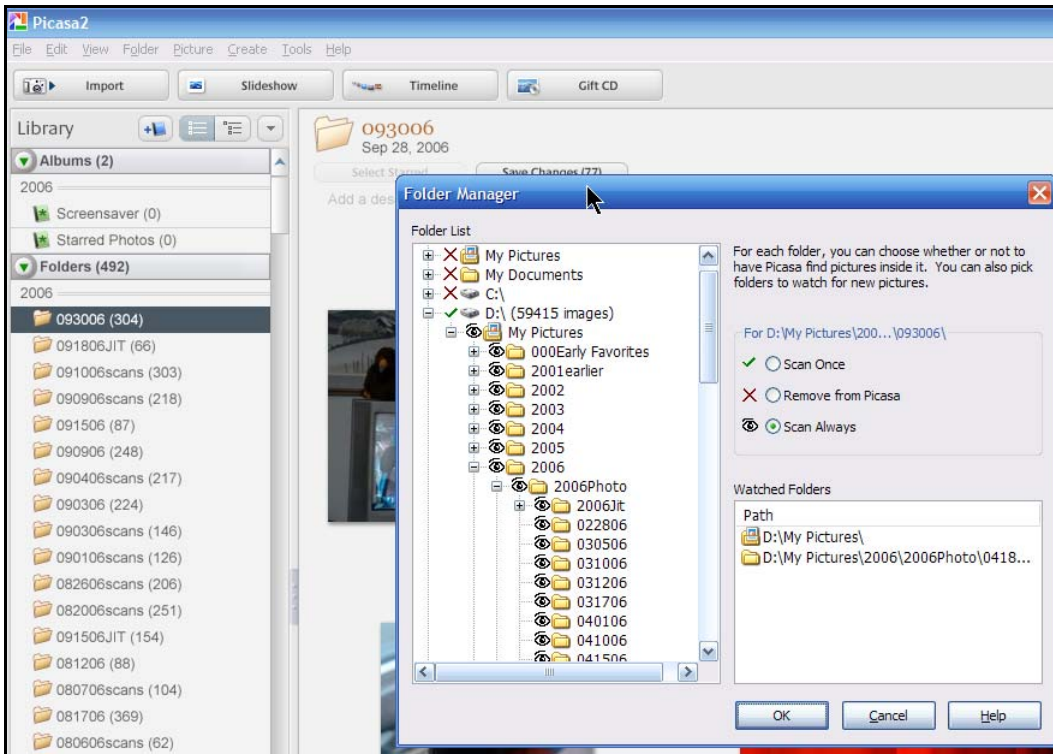


Backing up my photographs to another hard disk using SyncBack

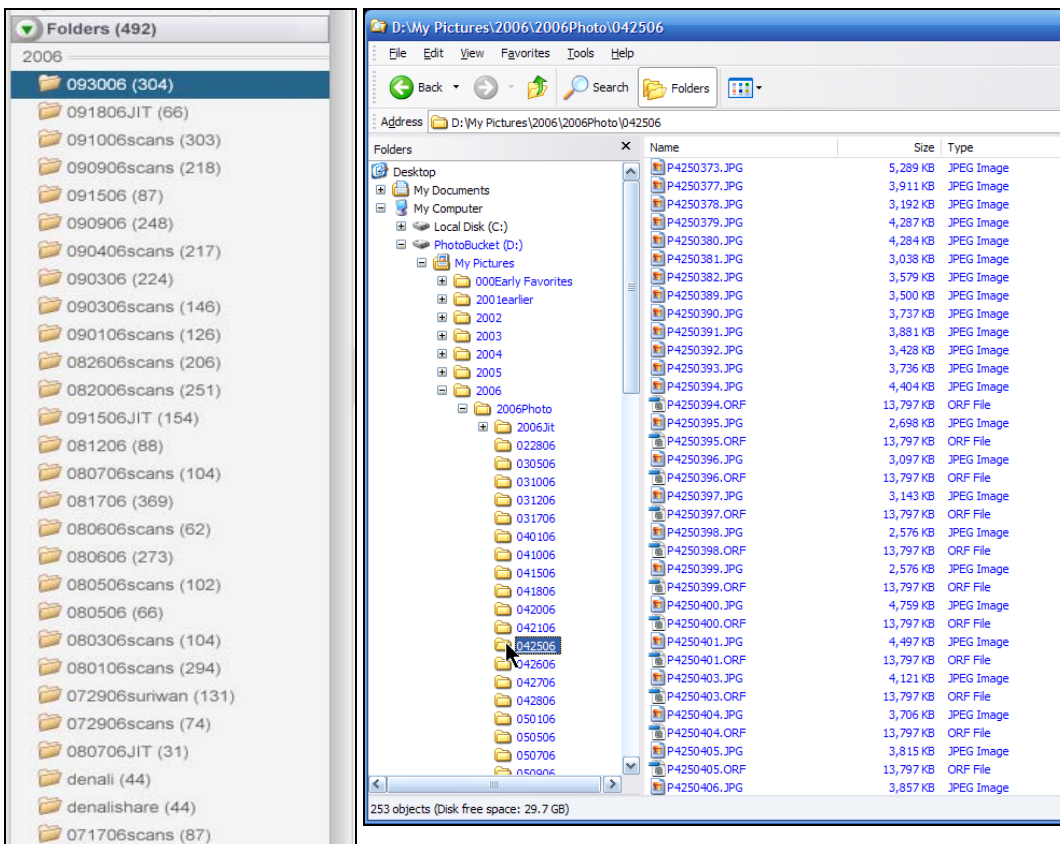
<http://www.2brightsparks.com/freeware/freeware-hub.html>



Picasa Tools Folder Manager (You can control the folders that Picasa will use to import)



Notice the Operating System Folders and the Picasa Folders



The Online Photographer by Mike Johnston

<http://www.theonlinephotographer.com/>

The 1-2-3 Method of Editing

If I were disciplined, which I'm not, about organizing, for which I have perilously close to zero aptitude, I would organize my books and music by the 1-2-3 method.

Some people like their books and music to be organized alphabetically, some by date (either of issuance or acquisition), some by subject matter. People have all sorts of preferences. I'm not saying one is better than the next; I wouldn't know, for one thing, and for another thing, anybody can do any dang thing they please. Ain't up to me.

The 1-2-3 (or A-B-C) method is as follows. Let's say we're talking about music. You have one shelf, or drawer, or place in the house for the CDs you really, really love—the ones you think are stone classics, that have deep meaning for you, the ones you cherish. They're your desert island discs, the best of the best in your view.

In a different place or shelves or cabinets you put good CDs that for some reason fall short of the very first rank. These are the "2's" or "B's." This group is usually much larger than the 1's. Maybe ten times as large. These are all good records, things you enjoy and want to keep, but just not the very best. This category might also be where you keep things you've never really listened to much, other peoples' favorites that you bought on their recommendation, music you bought because of reviews or top-100 lists that for some reason never really grabbed you personally.



This is a picture I like. It's from a 4x5 neg. I made it in 1983. I remember the day (gorgeous) and the place (a cliff overlooking Little Traverse Bay) and the old stump is gone now. But it just doesn't quite make it, if you know what I mean. The shutter speed was slow enough that the water is just barely blurry. There's a sailboat out on the bay that I thought would show up better, but it's out of the d-o-f and doesn't show up clearly. There might have been a great picture here; maybe. I just didn't quite find it, is all. I like it pretty well, but it's not all that great. This is a classic "2."

The 3 category is for the junk. This is stuff we accumulate when we collect music or books or, probably, anything else, that just isn't much of anything to us. It's not quite bad enough to get rid of, but at the same time you're sort of embarrassed to keep it. Maybe there's one song that's pretty good. Maybe it's a guilty pleasure. Maybe it's a "classic" in a genre you just can't bring yourself to like, or something you've outgrown. Maybe it's something you learned from or that you keep around for demonstration purposes. Maybe it's a CD that an old girlfriend played constantly, and it drove you crazy, but, now, it brings back memories, even if not all of them are good. These are the 3's. Not saying it's all crap, objectively, just that it's crap to you.

(I actually do use the 1-2-3 method for books I've read. I keep a list of the titles and just put one, two, or three marks next to each. Ones are for books I loved and thought were great and would recommend to anybody, twos books that I didn't mind reading but that were flawed in some way, or just good for me, or that fell short. Threes are books that were a waste of time, that don't rise above their flaws, that I wouldn't recommend under any circumstances. It's surprising how *clarifying* this modest little exercise is.)

Pictures a-plenty

Naturally, I think the 1-2-3 method of editing is perfect for pictures. Have you ever gone to somebody's flickr or pbase or photoSIG page only to find eight minor variations of what amounts to the same picture, or dozens of also-rans spiced with a great shot here or there? A huge majority of photographers have real trouble with this. They're unable to pick their own best shots and push the rest aside. They get their heads turned by all the almos, the near misses, the ones they worked on (if you *worked* for it, it must be good, right?), the ones that have memories attached, the ones that look like good pictures they've admired by others but that aren't truly theirs, the ones they were proud of for some reason even though nobody else can quite detect why.

The 1-2-3 method encourages you to be ruthless but doesn't demand that you give up all your babies or discard any of your crap. [John Gossage](#) once said to me that you should keep everything you do because you'll learn from it in the future—you'll detect patterns you can't see at first, find clues to what you're all about. It becomes information you can mine later. "Throw it in a box and stick it in the attic," he says. Throw it on a DVD and stick it in the virtual attic.

If it's tough to toss your 3's, it's agony to discard your 2's. The closer something comes to being good, to working, the more of your blood and sweat is really in it, the harder it is to admit that it's not quite what you envisioned, not quite a real hit. The 2's are the fool's gold that lead us all astray. At the same time, you can't really bring yourself to jack them all, and why should you? There are other uses for pictures than merely being great pictures. They're records, memories, learning tools, signposts, talismans, admonitions...and they're *yours*.

Still, only the ones that *completely* meet with your *wholehearted* approval should make it into the 1 category.

A photograph, in my view, is either a yes or a no. If it's a yes, it's *all* yes. Commit to it. Claim it. Admit you can't do better. Some things we love, and you should love what you love. A 1 is a 1 is a 1.

I'm not saying this is the only way to organize pictures. It might not suit your personality or your needs. To me, though, it's almost a self-teaching tool. I seem to learn from it on an ongoing basis.

Comments

Mike, Lightroom, and some of the other image management packages make this painless. I'm as disorganized as anyone, but when I empty my card after a day's shoot, I do two things as I take my very first look at the content: deleting the pictures of obviously little merit, and the assignation of stars to the ones that stand out. Lightroom gives you the choice of five stars. I tend to go with 5, 4, 3 and zero stars, though. It's a great discipline, and although you're free to change your assessment at any time, it helps you immensely later in terms of knowing what you've got.

Posted by: [the editor](#) | [Friday, 14 September 2007 at 06:58 PM](#)

Spot on. And this is a major deficiency of Flickr. I upload, well, everything, except the weakest of 3:s. Flickr isn't just an exhibition place, it's my offline backup, my repository, my safety in case of fire or disaster. Everything I don't want to actually just delete will end up on Flickr; that's what it's there for.

But, as you say, it means I show people a lot of crap. Things whose only value lies in its meaning to me, but not to anybody else. Near-misses. And - not to forget - truly bad pictures I upload simply because it's the fastest, easiest way to distribute the image as part of some discussion (why, for example that image fails so badly, or about the chromatic aberration evident in a corner of the image or whatever).

I try, and I notice a lot of other people do too, to post images so that the last couple in a batch are good/least bad. Those are the ones that will end up last in the photo stream and those that random people will be most likely to see. But that is a weak mechanism.

I would really, really like FLickr to have a separate, higher-visibility stream of pictures that you tag for it. I could upload thirty so-so images that end up in the normal stream, but then the two images that I "star" or whatever will end up as the latest two images in my "exhibition stream" or "gallery stream" or something. That gallery stream would normally be the one your contacts see and the one added to the system stream of images.

Posted by: [Janne](#) | [Friday, 14 September 2007 at 07:39 PM](#)

Right on, Mike. I do a similar sort of sieve on my own images.

I've taken to looking at my shots in Aperture. I go through everything very quickly in full screen, and give the ones I like 3 stars. I then go through the 3 stars, and then add or subtract from each depending on how much I like or don't like the image in context of what I consider the above average shots from the day. I now have a bunch of 2, 3, and 4 star images. I then go through the 4 stars, and repeat the process. That leaves me with just a few 5 star images that I can as genuinely good images. Essentially, my star ratings are subjective to the group. I can then gather all of the 5 stars from my library, and do a further sort for my all-time favorites, the A's.

For example, the image in the article might have gone through my first sieve, but on the second pass would have been downgraded, and not made the keeper list.

This is a reasonably quick process for me, mostly because I'm fairly critical of myself, and also because I usually (well, now at least ;-) don't take 100's of pictures at a time.

Posted by: Archer | [Friday, 14 September 2007 at 08:16 PM](#)

A sailboat?

Posted by: [Stan Banos](#) | [Friday, 14 September 2007 at 09:26 PM](#)

My 3s are on my contact sheets, my 2s are those that got printed but now sit in boxes under the bed or in piles, somewhere. My 1s are on the wall.

Hywel

Posted by: hywel | [Friday, 14 September 2007 at 10:13 PM](#)

Stan,

There's a white vertical smudge at the horizon (roughly on the left-hand third). I assume that's a sail boat...

Regards,

Rob...

Posted by: [Rob...](#) | [Friday, 14 September 2007 at 10:54 PM](#)

There's one peculiar thing about editing that I've noticed over the years. I've judged several photography competitions, and most of them have a 'Portfolio' category, where the entrant has to submit a set of prints that are themed in some way. However many prints the rules stipulate have to be entered into this category, somehow the entrant is often unable to make up the numbers in terms of good pictures. That probably isn't terribly clear, but what I mean is this: if the rules state that five prints must be entered, very often you'll see four very good photographs, and one mediocre one. If four pictures are required, then there will be three good ones and one that is completely off beam. And so it goes on. I've never quite understood how so many photographers seem unable to quite make up the numbers in what's often an otherwise high quality submission.

Posted by: Ailsa McWhinnie | [Friday, 14 September 2007 at 10:55 PM](#)

It's odd but was just writing on this, but in a different context.

The problems with Flickr et al is that we really don't take the time to work with one photo. To tweak and refine, think about how to frame it (online and off). To spend time with the work.

Now, there's almost a frantic interest in getting home, going through the photo quickly, putting them online. They're not going to spoil if they sit in the computers, but it's such a "do it now" world.

I've been going back to some older photos and found 1's among the 2's and 3's because I've really looked at the photos. I put them into a slideshow and played them on my TV. I thought about each, and how it could be salvaged. Even worked with combining photos into a set, taking three 2's and turning them into a 1 combination. The process has been quite enjoyable and, as you mention in your writing, educational.

The only part of your writing I disagree with is, "Admit you can't do better." I don't think there's any of my pictures where I can admit I can't do better. I'm not sure if it's because my skills aren't up to snuff, and I'm honest enough to know it; or that I'm over picky.

Posted by: [Shelley](#) | [Friday, 14 September 2007 at 11:18 PM](#)

A friend of mine says everybody has only so much organization in their lives. So if you're organized in one area, it means other areas will suffer.

I still have to reach the 1-2-3 stage. I've got a 140GB partition with 117 GB of photos I took during the last couple of years. With all the other stuff on it, the partition is close to overflowing. I have to go through all the photo directories and weed all the misfocuses, people/things intruding into the frame, accidental duplicates and so on and so forth. Then we can talk about 1-2-3. And sometimes it's hellishly difficult to see the difference between 1 and 2. You see what you intended on the finished photo, not what really is there. The situation is made worse by the fact that sometimes you can save a photo with a bit of judicious cropping or even a stylizing action or two in Photoshop. Now, try to guess which ones will work in advance...

Posted by: [erlik](#) | [Friday, 14 September 2007 at 11:47 PM](#)

Isn't it funny how many people develop a solution for a similar problem and they all come up with the same thing.

Since using Lightroom I have warmed to the star-rating. It slightly differs in being a 0-1-2-3-4-5 system but it's still the same idea.

I have about 10 photos with 5 stars in my IMatch database. Quite a lot more have 4 stars - My 3s and 2s are just different grades of "also good, but not perfect". The majority has no stars - They are kept merely for the collection - a bit like your 3s.

Good article!

Posted by: [Fred W](#) | [Saturday, 15 September 2007 at 02:05 AM](#)

I agree with what erlik says above; it's hard to separate what you intended from what you got. I think that's a good part of why Garry Winogrand didn't look at his pictures for a good year after he shot them; to forget the intentions and be only able to see the result.

I don't have that kind of patience. What I do do, though, is go back through my older photo posts on Flickr, and my older folders on my hard drive, and take a second look at things.

I also agree that there is really no need for more than three ratings plus the trashcan. I tend to use between one and three stars in Aperture (same five-star system as Lightroom, AFAIK). I trash obvious failures immediately (totally missed focus, unsalvageable over or under-exposure, etc).

Posted by: [Matthew Brown](#) | [Saturday, 15 September 2007 at 02:46 AM](#)

I use Lightroom and the star rating system.

1=delete

2=keep for reference as a jpeg buried on the hard-drive

3=flickr

4=my photoblog
5=portfolio (not many of these)

Works well for me. Except a month or so after the fact and I may lose emotional attachment to an image and I think, "Why did I bother with that?" Maybe it was a great image/place/circumstance in 'real life' but not such a great photo - it can take me a while to see this. Then it may get downgraded. And the opposite can happen too.

Posted by: [justin](#) | [Saturday, 15 September 2007 at 04:52 AM](#)

Thanks for reminding me that I have a website full of #3's Mike

I think I need to let someone else filter out what is on it and edit the 100 pics I have that I want on it.

Your system seems logical in that you actually have a system.....

Posted by: [charlie d](#) | [Saturday, 15 September 2007 at 06:10 AM](#)

My photographs are mediocre, so the #1 category rarely appears.

As for number 2, it gets split into 2 eh and

2 be or not 2 be. In actual fact when reviewing some of 2 eh make into numeral uno.

As for number three, most of my images qualify for that III; being neither note worthy nor

very happy images. They are just shots.

There is final category, one which has appeared with the advent of digitals.

That is called goodbye, erase now, before the rest of the world sees your errors.

Maybe that's what different about digital, the image exists only as something viewed on a screen. If you don't like what's on the screen, change channels.

Posted by: Bryce Lee | [Saturday, 15 September 2007 at 07:35 AM](#)

The 1-2-3 method seems to be what I use in iTunes. I only have a few five star tunes (maybe 30 at this moment) and then maybe 10 times as many four star tunes. The rest are unrated.

This way I know I can easily find music I know I'll enjoy without having to remember a specific tune. And the rest sits quietly on the hard drive, waiting for their 15 seconds of fame

Posted by: Björn Simonson | [Saturday, 15 September 2007 at 07:52 AM](#)

Funny you should mention it -- I use virtually exactly this 1-2-3 approach in my own photo editing. I shoot RAW + JPEG, and use Cerious Software's ThumbsPlus for my image management.

Upon uploading a set of photos to my PC, into their own folder, I create a sub-folder called "JPEGs for Review," putting in it the full set of JPEGs from the shoot.

I then create a sub-sub-folder called "Best." Into it go the "2"s or better from my review, leaving the "3"s in "JPEGs for Review." I finally review the "2"s in "Best" and move the "1"s into a sub-sub-sub-folder called "Selected."

It may sound involved, but it works surprisingly smoothly and is a method I've been using for over five years. It's too ingrained in my procedures to switch over to the "ranking" and "sorting" methods of newer programs like Lightroom.

Posted by: [Stephen Haynes](#) | [Saturday, 15 September 2007 at 09:53 AM](#)

Dear Mike,

A great description of your methods.

I hit upon a similar one for myself, out of desperation. When I need to put together a group of photos to show someone, I take my portfolio and start going through it looking for the "oh my god, I have to show that one or I'll just curl up and die" emotional reaction. When I get that, it goes in the "1" pile. If not, it goes in the "2" pile.

I try to keep all other thoughts out of my head-- how I felt when I made the photo, whether it balances the selection, whether it's a great photo or a REALLY great photo. I wait for that "must show" feeling.

If I'm lucky, I end up with a "1" stack that's around 80% of the number of prints I'm aiming for. If I'm not, the stack has 200%, and then I have to make some hard choices. It's more often the latter than the former. But it's a lot easier to deal with 200% than 1000% of the number, which is what I started with.

pax / Ctein

Posted by: Ctein | [Saturday, 15 September 2007 at 12:51 PM](#)

Mike, your 1,2,3 system is exactly how I've been organising my cameras and lenses. I haven't gotten around to organising the photos yet.

Posted by: [Craig Norris](#) | [Saturday, 15 September 2007 at 09:29 PM](#)

holy jumbled sock drawer...what's next, how y'all sort your tea bags?

Posted by: dyathink | [Saturday, 15 September 2007 at 11:24 PM](#)

Reading this post actually made me realise I do already use the '1-2-3' system sub-consciously.

I have my 1's on redbubble (<http://www.redbubble.com/people/gumtree>). My 2's on Picasaweb (<http://picasaweb.google.com/Sam.Gundry>) and 3's, well, they're hidden away on my hard drive and hardly ever looked at...

Posted by: [gumtree](#) | [Sunday, 16 September 2007 at 05:55 PM](#)

Follow on question: when is the best time to make that judgement, in what state of mind and should we revisit once in a while to re-validate; if so, what is the best interval?

Posted by: [Dirk](#) | [Monday, 17 September 2007 at 07:34 PM](#)

I'm here to second your subtle suggestion that people keep stuff that belongs in category three. Digital storage gets cheaper very quickly, making it sometimes seem short-sighted to delete any photos, even the most awful. A single external drive could replace all of my current externals, cost much less than they did and offer five to ten times their combined storage. All those photos that seemed expensive to keep just a few years ago are now almost free to store, even including backup costs. This is something like the opposite of

the old "take out a mortgage when inflation is high" adage - ever-cheaper storage is a digital photographer's dream. It mostly just takes a rating system like the one you've described to make it all work, together with a bit (not much) of keywording.

The sight of a photo (even one that might have been considered awful) from years ago, particularly when it includes mundane items like billboards, adverts, shopfronts that no longer exist and so on can provide the unexpected delight of memories from a previously forgotten day and make it worth storing everything.

Those who, like previous commentpr Janne, use a Flickr Pro account to back up and store all their shots could easily use their uploading tools, even Flickr's new and much improved web uploader, to set all photos to be private by default, later choosing to make individual photos public. This still allows all everything to be tagged and easily retrievable by the photographer. That said, if Janne's current Flickr stream is an unedited stream of everything he ever shot, I envy him.

Posted by: Bahi P | [Tuesday, 18 September 2007 at 11:53 AM](#)

An Introduction to the Photo Editing Process.

Editing or enhancing a photograph clarifies and expresses your original photographic intention. Photoshop or Picasa are tools to improve or clarify your original intention. Using cropping, straightening, editing, adjusting the dynamic range, sharpening, cleaning up small details, and adjusting color are means to clarify a photograph. Using software to adjust an image is as important as using a darkroom to print an image, software is an integral part of digital photography.

There are many ways to use Photoshop and many different ways to solve identical problems. In this course we will be using a limited subset of Photoshop tools that I have found useful. The crucial idea is that you develop your own individual subset of Photoshop procedures that will accomplish your goals.

Picasa is an excellent, free, alternative to using Photoshop, for editing digital photography. For many people Picasa will be sufficient, but it is not a professional tool. Picasa will seem limited if you have invested the time to learn Photoshop. Picasa has two serious limitations, there are no tools to remove dust or clutter, and there is no method of doing selective enhancements to an image. Picnik is a new web based photo editing tool. The advanced version costs \$25 per year, and is worth it. Picnik also integrates with Flickr and Picasa Albums.

What is a good technical photograph?

A good technical photograph should not be an accident. Even if a photograph is technically excellent, it does not mean that it is an excellent photograph, an excellent photograph can be technically terrible. Some of the attributes of an excellent technical photograph include clear composition, a full tonal range, appropriate colors, appropriate sharpness, and no distracting technical flaws.

Evaluating the image: What image problems are you trying to solve?

The first crucial step to editing a photograph is to evaluate the photographic problems that you want to solve. Or to establish a creative interpretation of the photograph that will require editing. If you have no purpose you have no tasks! Most photographs have a common set of tasks that should be evaluated. When you are preparing to edit your photograph go through this list to make a mental set of tasks that you want to accomplish. Depending on the tasks you might not need to use the full capability of Photoshop to edit your photograph.

Problem: There are too many tools and choices and I do not know where to begin

Solution: Evaluate the image

Solution: Organize the workspace

Problem: Composition, frame, or point of view

Solution: Cropping

Problem: Tilted or crooked image

Solutions: Straightening

Problem: Limited dynamic range and poor exposure

Solution: Adjusting the Dynamic Range

Problem: Poor color or color caste

Solutions: Neutralizing highlight and mid tone color cast

Problem: Blurred image detail

Solution: Sharpening

Problem: Image Noise

Solution: Reducing Luminance and Chroma Noise

Problem: Junk in the photograph

Solution: Remove the junk

Problem: Part of the image needs tonal adjustment

Solution: Select and remedy the problem

Problem: Enlarging or reducing image size for printing

Solution: Resample Image

Problem: Subject Blur

Solution: Retake the photograph or accept the way it is!

Problem: Wrong plane of focus

Solution: Retake the photograph or accept the way it is!

Problem: Poor content

Solution: Retake the photograph or accept the way it is!

Problem: Wrong moment in time.

Solution: Retake the photograph or accept the way it is!