Lightroom Bitesize by **John Hallett Photography**

Lightroom Bitesize: Backing up the catalogue

Before we go into the details of how to back-up the catalogue, it may be worth understanding WHY we need to do so. And we do need to do this - it is very, very important.
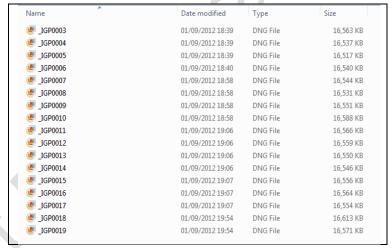
It may surprise you to know, and in fact you may initially not believe this, but whenever you do any post-processing to an image in Lightroom - and that includes adding keywords, changing exposure, sharpening or converting to black & white - the original image file imported from your camera is NOT changed in any way. Instead, Lightroom creates a new file that just contains all the data relating to the processing.

Don't believe it?

Here's a screenshot of the image files from the first evening of a North Wales photoshoot as we took a stroll up Rhyl's promenade. At least two of these have been post-processed in Lightroom since then. Notice anything unusual?

Hopefully you will notice that the 'date modified' is the same for every file. In fact, that's the date the image was taken.

Lightroom hasn't changed the original image files at all - despite my processing work. That's because all of the data from the processing is stored in a separate file.

This file, and the information that links this new file to the original image file, is stored in the catalogue. And so if your catalogue gets corrupted you lose ALL of the processing information from ALL of the images in Lightroom. Admittedly you will still have the original image files but all of them will be the same as when you imported them from your camera.
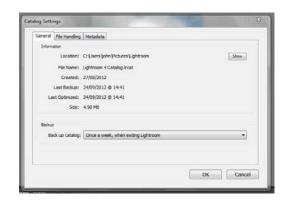
Now, as you import your images, hopefully you will have set up Lightroom to backup the image files to a different hard drive. But now you need to set up Lightroom to backup the catalogue as well.

Click on Edit and then choose Catalog Settings...

First we need to specify where the backup file is to be located - and this is achieved in a peculiar way.

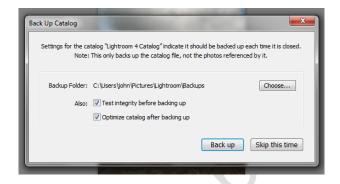First set the backup to occur every time Lightroom exits by choosing that setting in the drop-down box.

Press OK and exit Lightroom.

Now the Back-up dialog box will display - and you can use the 'choose' option to specify the back-up file location. Preferably, use a different drive than the one used for the actual catalogue.

Press the 'back-up' button to start the backup.

The next time you use Lightroom you can now go back into the Catalog Settings dialog and decide how often you want to run the backup:

- Never (Not what you want to choose)
- Once a month, when exiting Lightroom
- Once a week, when exiting Lightroom
- Once a day, when exiting Lightroom
- Every time Lightroom exits
- When Lightroom next exits

I'm not sure what the difference is between the last two but choose wisely and you will never have that sinking feeling that your hard drive is corrupt.

If you found this tutorial useful please let me know by leaving a comment on my Facebook page (or just 'Like' it) at https://www.facebook.com/johnhallettphotographs/ . Thanks