The DAM Book Guide to

Multi-Catalog Workflow with Lightroom 5

A Multimedia eBook

Text, Photos and Videos By Peter Krogh
About the Author
Peter Krogh is an internationally recognized expert on Digital Asset Management for photography and other media. A commercial and editorial photographer for 30 years, he wrote The DAM Book (O'Reilly 2005 and 2009), and became a sought-after speaker, workshop leader and consultant worldwide.

When not photographing, Peter spends much of his time researching and writing about the business, technical and creative challenges presented by digital photography. He lives in the Washington DC area with his wife and two daughters.

About The DAM Book Workflow Guides
When the first two editions of The DAM Book were published, they included a thorough discussion of the principles of storage, organization and workflow, followed by demonstrations of that workflow in action. Starting with the third edition of The DAM Book, the workflow will be split into DAM Book Workflow Guides that are both software and task specific.

The split between fundamental principles and workflow demonstrations allows each to be more targeted, comprehensive and specific. It also allows the content to be updated on a more organic schedule.

About DAM Useful Publishing
DAM Useful Publishing is committed to providing clear and comprehensive tools to help photographers, and those working with photographs, to understand the digital photography ecosystem, and to maximize the longevity, discoverability, utility and value of the photographic image.

About the Photos in this book
The photos in this book were all created while the author was on a month-long trip in China, leading Lightroom workshops for Chinese professional photographers. With the exception of composited panoramas, all images have only been processed in Lightroom.
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This chapter outlines techniques for creating “feeder” catalogs to use with incoming shoots, which are later added to a Master Catalog. This provides added speed for people with large catalogs, and can be the basis of excellent on-location workflow.

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When your catalog gets too big for normal daily use, you may want to split into Working and Archive Catalogs. This workflow manages the bulk of your collection in a large Archive Catalog, while it keeps current shoots and “greatest hits” available at your fingertips in a Works-in-Progress Catalog. The chapter also shows how to use this workflow in conjunction with Project Catalogs.

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Watch it in Action  
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When your catalog gets too big for normal daily use, you may want to split into Working and Archive Catalogs. This workflow manages the bulk of your collection in a large Archive Catalog, while it keeps current shoots and "greatest hits" available at your fingertips in a Works-in-Progress Catalog. The chapter also shows how to use this workflow in conjunction with Project Catalogs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WF4-1</td>
<td>Synchronized Catalogs Animated Flowchart</td>
<td>3:08</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Option 1 - Syncing with Import from Catalog**

- **Who should use this Workflow?**
- **Workflow Outline**
- **Watch it in Action**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workflow</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WF4-2</td>
<td>Synchronized Catalogs - Import from Catalog</td>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WF4-3</td>
<td>Synchronized Catalogs - Sync Services</td>
<td>7:11</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Option 3 - Syncing with Transfer Catalogs**

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WF4-4</td>
<td>Synchronized Catalogs - Using Transfer Catalogs</td>
<td>9:31</td>
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**Transfer Catalogs and Collisions**

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<td>WF4-5</td>
<td>Synchronized Catalogs - Transfer Collisions</td>
<td>5:14</td>
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### Workflow 5 - Satellite Catalogs

Sometimes it’s useful to export a part of a catalog, do some work to it, and then reimport the catalog back into the Master Catalog. This chapter outlines several ways you can accomplish this.

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<tr>
<th>Workflow</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WF5-1</td>
<td>Satellite Catalog - Option 1</td>
<td>12:53</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Option 1 - Export Satellite Catalog with Previews only**

- **Who should use this Workflow?**
- **Workflow Outline**
- **Watch it in Action**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workflow</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WF5-2</td>
<td>Satellite Catalog - Option 2</td>
<td>8:29</td>
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**Option 2 - Satellite Catalog and include Smart Previews**

- **Workflow Outline**
- **Watch it in Action**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workflow</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WF5-3</td>
<td>Satellite Catalog - Option 3</td>
<td>10:17</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Option 3 - Satellite Catalog with Duplicate Image Files**

- **Workflow Outline**
- **Watch it in Action**
In my workshops and presentations, I’m frequently asked how to use Lightroom in a multi-computer or multi-user workflow. It’s a vexing problem for the Lightroom power user. Unfortunately, Lightroom is not really designed as a multi-user tool yet, so we need to use some workarounds.

This book presents techniques for using Lightroom on multiple computers and for using multiple catalogs. None of these is perfect, but many users can manage to make these work. I’ve been using some of these quite successfully to manage a large image collection, so I know from personal experience that they work.

Before we get too deeply into it, we’ll want to outline the reason that you may need multi-catalog workflow.

Why multiple catalogs?

Lightroom’s design is optimized for the use of one single catalog. As proof of this, you’ll notice that you can only open one catalog at a time. If it’s possible to get by with one single catalog, that’s what you should do. But not everyone can make this work. There are several reasons that people typically have to split catalogs:

- The collection is too large for a single catalog.
- It’s faster to work on a smaller Project Catalog for new files.
- More than one person is at work on the images.
- The photographer uses a laptop on location, and a desktop in the studio.
- The photographer has a computer at two different locations to sync.

As you determine which of the techniques you’ll want to use, it’s important to understand why you need to use multiple catalogs. We’ll reference these different needs when we get to the workflow section.
About this book

This is a true multimedia book. I’ve split the content into both text and videos. I’ve had a lot of experience building training materials this way, and I think it's a very effective way to learn.

I find that videos are excellent for software training. Most photographers are visual people and learn workflow much better by seeing it in action. But truly learning the workflow often requires brushing up on the work order until it’s second nature. Videos don’t do a particularly good job at this. It can be tough to find the exact steps you’re looking for when returning to a video, and often it can be inconvenient to replay the video during a work session.

I’ve designed this book so that the material you need to refer back to more frequently is contained in the text. You will find a list of steps below each movie, outlining the workflow. You can refer to these after you’ve watched the movies to help you remember the exact work order. Many people like to print this out and use the written part of the book like a regular book. This allows you to make notes, as well as to refer to it while your computer is busy doing other things.

Watching the Videos

The videos are designed to be seen in the order of they appear. In general, I have assume you have read the preceding text before seeing the related video.

Of course you can skip around. You might want to dive right in to the workflow chapters in order to decide what’s most relevant to your own needs. But I suggest that you take the time to look at the information in every chapter so you understand the way I use the tools and terminology.

In order for the videos to play, you need to open the PDF with software that supports embedded videos, such as the free Adobe Acrobat Reader.

This figure shows the eBook folder. The PDF and the videos must be in exactly this folder structure for the videos to remain linked to the PDF.
Warning: The PDF will lose the link to the videos if anything is changed within the original folder structure. The folder structure should look like the one on the previous page. Consult the Read Me document for more information.

What you won’t find in this book

This book does not cover basic Lightroom functionality, nor does it cover the use of any modules outside of Library. (And it only covers Library uses that are directly related to the workflows described.)

If you want to learn more about those areas of Lightroom, you can check and see what other offerings I have. You should also consider getting Victoria Bampton’s excellent Lightroom 5, The Missing FAQ. You might also want to look at Martin Evening’s Lightroom 5 book, or the training on Lynda.com.

Assumptions about the reader

This book is not a basic Lightroom book, nor is it a comprehensive one. It is meant for the Lightroom user who already knows the program reasonably well and is looking for multi-catalog workflow solutions.

Terminology used in this book

The techniques and workflows that are outlined in this book have grown from a comprehensive set of theories about Digital Asset Management (DAM) for photography. I first published these theories and practices in The DAM Book, Digital Asset Management for Photographers (O’Reilly 2005 and 2009). I have found that being rigorous about workflow theory and consistent in use of terminology is extremely helpful in teaching digital photography methods.

This section outlines some of the common terminology that is used in the book. It’s essential to have an understanding of these terms as you read, so I’ve capitalized them whenever they are used throughout the book.
**Catalog types**

In order to create a good multi-catalog workflow, it's important to know exactly why you are making a new catalog. There are several different reasons for using multi-catalog workflow, and I have defined the most common below.

**Master Catalog** - As the name implies, this describes a comprehensive and “permanent” catalog of images. In a single catalog workflow, there is only one Master. In a Multi-catalog workflow, we may still have a single Master that is augmented by Project Catalogs. You also might have different Master Catalogs for separate bodies of work. You also might have your Master Catalogs split between a Working Catalog and an Archive Catalog.

**Working Catalog** - This describes a Master Catalog that keeps track of current works in progress. At some point, images are transferred to an Archive Catalog or some other kind of Master Catalog.

**Archive Catalog** - This is a type of Master Catalog that is used primarily to manage image files that have been put into the archive. It is useful for the management of very large image collections in conjunction with a Working Catalog. Using an Archive Catalog can allow you to trim the Working Catalog down to a manageable size.

**Synchronized Catalogs** - Synchronized Catalogs are a set of duplicate catalogs. These are useful for allowing access to the Image Collection from more than one computer.

**Project Catalog** - A Project Catalog is a temporary catalog that is used to manage and optimize a project of photos. Eventually a Project Catalog should be merged into some kind of Master Catalog. In this book, I use the term Project Catalog to refer to a new shoot of images coming into the collection.

**Satellite Catalog** - A Satellite Catalog is made of a set of images that are exported from a Master Catalog for some purpose and are then reimported. This is useful if you want to work on a subset of images while traveling, and you don’t have the room to take the Master Catalog with you.

**Transfer Catalog** - A Transfer Catalog is used to take the settings from one catalog and move them to another catalog. It is useful when sending images from a Working Catalog to an Archive Catalog, for instance.

**Test Catalog** - A Test Catalog is exactly what the name implies: one that is created for the specific purpose of testing some function. It’s a very helpful tool when exploring Lightroom Multi-catalog techniques.
Storage Terms

The following terms refer to the various components of your image storage setup.

**Image Collection or Photo Library** - The Image Collection or Photo Library is a term we’ll use to describe the image files you will manage with Lightroom.

**Photo Library Drive(s)** - The Photo Library Drive(s) describe the storage medium you use to store your image files.

**Primary Copy** - The Primary Copy of your data is the main copy. You should always know which is the primary copy of your data, whether we’re discussing the image files themselves, or the catalog.

**Backup** - A Backup copy is a secondary copy of the primary data, used for recovery and restoration in the event of a problem with the Primary Copy of the data.

**Permanent Home** - I use the term Permanent Home to refer to the unified primary storage for the Photo Library. Typically, this is the main repository of your image files. Ideally, it is a large hard drive or multi-drive mechanism. The flow of files should generally be seen as a path from the camera into a Permanent Home.

Note that no digital storage is really permanent. Eventually, you’ll need to migrate the files from their current permanent home to another one on some new mechanism at some point in the future.

**Working Storage** - If you need to store your images somewhere between the initial download and the Permanent Home, you’ll be using Working Storage. This should be a clearly designated place.

**Synchronization Services** - Services like Dropbox and Google Drive allow you to keep duplicate copies of your files synchronized on multiple computers as well as in cloud storage. These services can be very useful for Synchronized Catalog workflow.

**Migrate** - Migration is the process of moving groups of files from one storage mechanism to another. This could be migration of files from Working Storage to the Photo Library, or it could be migration from your current Photo Library Drive to a new one.
Records, Fields and Values

Let's make sure we’re clear about some of the terminology we use to describe the information Lightroom stores, and how it relates to the Image Files. Lightroom is built on a database, which is made up of Records, Fields and Values. Lightroom does not store images, it stores Records of the images in database Fields.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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This chart is an illustration of how information is organized in Lightroom. Records are the horizontal rows that represent all information about a single image. The Vertical rows are fields and the individual boxes are Values for an image for a Field.

Record - The Record contains everything that Lightroom knows about a particular image, such as the Develop settings, the Keywords it has, the Collections it belongs to and more. When we transfer data from one Lightroom catalog to another, we are transferring the Records. In the illustration above, the Records are the horizontal rows.

Of course, the information in the Record is distinct from the image file itself.

Field - In a database program, we also have a series of columns that each represent a certain type of information. Lightroom has many hundreds of these columns, representing camera data, Lightroom settings, file information and more. Camera data includes information like shutter speed, ISO, and camera serial number. Each Lightroom setting, such as the Exposure slider, Keywords or date modified, has its own Field column. File information like file location, files size and file type also have their own columns.

Value - The actual setting for a particular Record for a particular Field is called a Value. So for the Record Krogh_130720_1234.DNG, the Value in the Exposure Field is -1, meaning that the Exposure slider has been adjusted to -1.