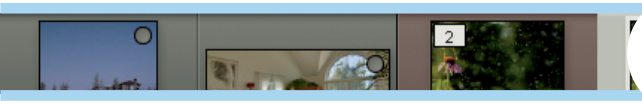

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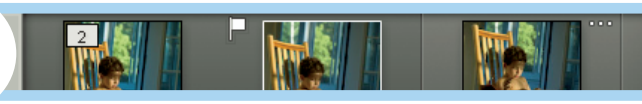

Introducing Lightroom

In This Chapter

- Understanding what Lightroom does
- Getting to know the Lightroom modules
- Becoming familiar with the interface
- Preparing for installation
- Customizing your preferences

Adobe Photoshop Lightroom — from this point, *Lightroom,* because that's what everybody really calls it — is a workflow tool for digital photographers. Digital photography has come a long way in recent years. The increasing number of people who are moving from shooting in *JPG format* — where the camera processes the data captured by the sensor and produces a JPG file — to shooting *raw* — where you take over processing the "raw" capture data to create the type of file you need — has created a huge need for tools to help manage the processing of large numbers of raw files. Lightroom is not just a raw processing tool though! You can tweak and adjust JPG, TIF, and PSD files, too. And that's just the thing. We have so many files and file types that need to be managed, processed, and delivered! Although many raw-processing applications are on the market, few are as ambitious, multifaceted, and well designed as Lightroom. Add to the mix the idea of an integrated workflow application and you have real state-of-the-art software.

Okay, I've dropped the term *workflow* twice now. It's probably time to get my definition out in the open because you're going to hear me repeat it quite often throughout this book. The goal of a workflow is to increase efficiency when it comes to carrying out the necessary (but often repeatable and at times unexciting) steps required to complete a task. One way to streamline your process is to increase efficiency in the transitions that occur as you move from task to task. Another way is to develop a repeatable methodology for how you do things, so that you always start with task A, then move to task B, and so on. By developing a well-thought out procedure, you don't lose time wondering what to do next or forgetting where you've

been. Lightroom comes to our aid on both counts. By providing a unified interface for the full spectrum of digital photography tasks, you aren't juggling three or four different applications at the same time. You can literally plug your camera into one end of Lightroom and produce prints, Web galleries, and more from the other. At the same time, each area — called a *module* — inside of Lightroom is structured to create a logical "start to finish" flow, which makes it really easy to know where you are and where you go next, and that's what a workflow is all about.

Adding Lightroom to Your Photo Toolkit

A photographer at any experience level is going to be carting around a serious amount of gear. Even the accessories have accessories! Although some photographers might derive some pleasure from getting new gear (okay, maybe a lot of pleasure), this stuff isn't cheap! So, each new addition to the family should pass muster and be worthy of being included. Here are some things I try to consider before adding new stuff:

- **Is it well supported?**
- **Does it play nicely with others?**
- **What can it do?**
- **What can't it do?**

Of course, money is a big factor in any purchasing process, but I assume that if you're at this stage in the decision-making process you've already accounted for your budget. I'm sure you have other considerations as well, but let me address how Lightroom stacks up in my experience.

Is it well supported?

Lightroom first appeared on the scene as a *beta release* back in January 2006, meaning it was incomplete but functional (although not without bugs) software that was free to use and test drive. Over the course of this beta phase (which lasted a year), Adobe was very keen for feedback and the Lightroom development team was actively engaged with the users of the product in a dedicated online discussion forum. Several improved beta versions were released before the final version 1.0 was made available in February 2007. Not only did a better product emerge from this process, but also a community of highly proficient Lightroom users evolved and is still growing strong. An incredible amount of tips, tricks, tutorials, and troubleshooting help has become available online from both Adobe and various users of the product because of this collaborative process.

You can find out more about how to get involved with the Lightroom community and where to find the best-available Lightroom resources in Chapter 14. Trust me; Lightroom is an incredibly well-supported product!

Does it play nicely with others?

Tools don't operate in a vacuum. At the very least, any new tools you adopt need to coexist with and complement your existing toolset. At the end of the day, new tools should help you get more from your old tools by helping you become more efficient, producing better results all around.

Image-editing applications, such as Photoshop or Photoshop Elements, have long been required for working with digital images because you have to push pixels around even when you're just shooting film and scanning. You might have had to correct for red-eye, crop to a new aspect ratio, enhance colors, remove spots, convert to grayscale, or do any number of other routine tasks. Whenever such a task came up, you always turned to your image editor of choice to get the job done — and you'll want to continue being able to do so in the future.

To sift through all those photos on your hard drive, you've undoubtedly used some type of file browser like Windows Explorer, Finder, or Adobe Bridge. You might have also used that file browser for routine maintenance tasks like renaming, moving, and deleting files. Perhaps you also used one of these applications for copying files from your memory card to your hard drive.

You've worked out routines, you know what each tool accomplishes and you know where to find everything. Along comes Lightroom and people rightfully ask, "How will this fit into my routine?" More to the point, folks want to know whether they have to give up something they like in adopting Lightroom and be stuck with doing some tasks in less-productive ways. In hopes of alleviating some of those worries, here's a closer look at how Lightroom stacks up against the image editors and file browsers that you know and use every day.

How Lightroom differs from Photoshop and Adobe Bridge

You can get by without Lightroom — I mean, people managed without Lightroom until recently, right? You can switch between Adobe Bridge (file browser) and Photoshop (image editor), can throw in an FTP (File Transfer Protocol) application when you need to upload Web galleries, or even use a third-party printing application when you want more control over print layouts than what Photoshop provides. You can always cobble together something, but wouldn't it be much more efficient if you could just use a single interface to import your photos from your memory card, add vital metadata, cull the clunkers, rate and group the keepers, throw together a slideshow, upload a Web gallery, and print out a contact sheet? What if you could do all that — and even save steps and settings as reusable shortcuts — from one application?

Wouldn't that change everything about how you work with your digital photos? Yes, of course! This is where Lightroom comes in. As a workflow tool, Lightroom takes over the management of your photos at the point you're copying them from your memory card and then brings them all the way to output and delivery.

Since I began using Lightroom, I've all but abandoned Adobe Bridge for viewing and interacting with my photos. As a file browser, Bridge is a superior

tool to Lightroom in many ways except one; Bridge can only show you what you point it at, as Bridge doesn't retain any information about what it has seen in the past. Comparatively, Lightroom is database driven, which means that after you introduce it to your photos (via an "import" process) it remembers everything about them. Being able to leverage the power of a database adds tremendous muscle to the management and processing of your photos.

With regard to editing photos, many people rightly wonder if Lightroom is an adequate replacement for Photoshop. Although I use Photoshop less now that I'm using Lightroom, Photoshop (or another image editor) is still a vital part of my toolkit — as I make clear in a sec. As a raw processor, though, Lightroom is able to leverage its database to work faster and smarter than the combination of Adobe Camera Raw and Photoshop. Because Lightroom and Camera Raw share essentially the same processing engine, you get all the benefits of Camera Raw built into Lightroom.

What kind of benefits, you ask? Okay, time for brass tacks: As an image processor, Lightroom can accomplish many tasks normally done by image editors or other raw photo processors, including the following:

- **Setting white balance**
- **Making tonal adjustments**
- **Reducing noise**
- **Enhancing colors**
- **Cropping**
- **Applying sharpening**

Not bad, right? Yet, although Lightroom covers a lot of ground, it can't do everything you might want to do with your photos. At times, you might need a pixel-editing application in your digital photo toolbox. If you need to perform any of the following tasks, for example, Lightroom would not be your tool of choice:

- **Working with selections**
- **Stitching together panoramas**
- **Creating high dynamic range photos**
- **Working with filters**
- **Combining multiple photos into one**

Adobe Photoshop is the prime tool to complement Lightroom. It gives you the most power and offers the greatest functionality (and tightest integration with Photoshop CS3). However, if you don't need that much power (or don't want to spend that much money), consider Photoshop Elements the next best option. Although not as full featured as its big brother, Elements can push pixels with the best of them. (Truth be told, when you consider all the features in Lightroom against your own needs, you may find that you won't need anything else for most of your work.)

Checking out the Lightroom Modules

Lightroom was built using a *modular* architecture, which means that Lightroom comprises a set of unique applications that share a common interface and that access a common database (or *catalog,* as Lightroom calls it). Each of the applications is referred to as a *module,* and Lightroom has five.

None of these modules can function outside of Lightroom. Although tightly integrated, they each have a set of unique menus, panels, and tools that tailor to the specific function each module is designed to handle.

I drill down into the specific panels, tools, and menus in the chapters ahead, but for now, I'm going to do the overview thing by taking a stab at what makes each module unique and then showing you how to get the most out of the common interface they all share.

What makes each module unique

Lightroom has five modules — but the beauty of modular construction is that the potential exists for more (perhaps many more) to be added. Adobe has opened only limited aspects of Lightroom's guts to third-party developers (just export functionality so far), and the outcome has been very positive.

The potential for extending Lightroom's functionality in the future is something to look forward to, but there's already plenty of power under the hood. Here's a list of the five modules you find in Lightroom:

- **The Library module:** Your organizational hub, the Library module (see Figure 1-1) is where many of your Lightroom sessions will start and end. Common Library module tasks include
  - *Keywording and metadata entry*
  - *File moving, deletion, and renaming*
  - *Finding, sorting, and grouping*
- **The Develop module:** The bulk of your image processing takes place in the Develop module. Armed with a powerful array of image-adjustment tools, as shown in Figure 1-2, common Develop module tasks include
  - *Setting white balance and tonal adjustments*
  - *Adjusting contrast and color*
  - *Reducing noise and capture sharpening*
  - *Cropping and adjusting crooked horizons*
  - *Removing red-eye and sensor spots*

Figure 1-1: The Library module.

Figure 1-2: The Develop module.

- **The Slideshow module:** The aptly named Slideshow module, shown in Figure 1-3, is for creating presentations of your photos. The tools in this module allow you to
  - *Adjust slideshow layout*
  - *Adjust slide transitions*
  - *Set the show to music*
- **The Print module:** If you print photos, you'll soon find the Print module, as shown in Figure 1-4, to be a valuable addition to your printing workflow. Here you find controls for
  - *Creating layouts and print packages*
  - *Using output-specific color profiles to ensure the best-looking prints (Chapters 3 and 13 cover profiles in greater depth)*
  - *Printing to a local printer or to a JPG file*
- **The Web module:** Getting your photos online in some capacity is a requirement these days. The Web module, as shown in Figure 1-5, allows you to manage your Web presence by letting you
  - *Choose from various photo gallery styles*
  - *Configure the look and feel of your Web gallery*
  - *Upload directly to your Web server*

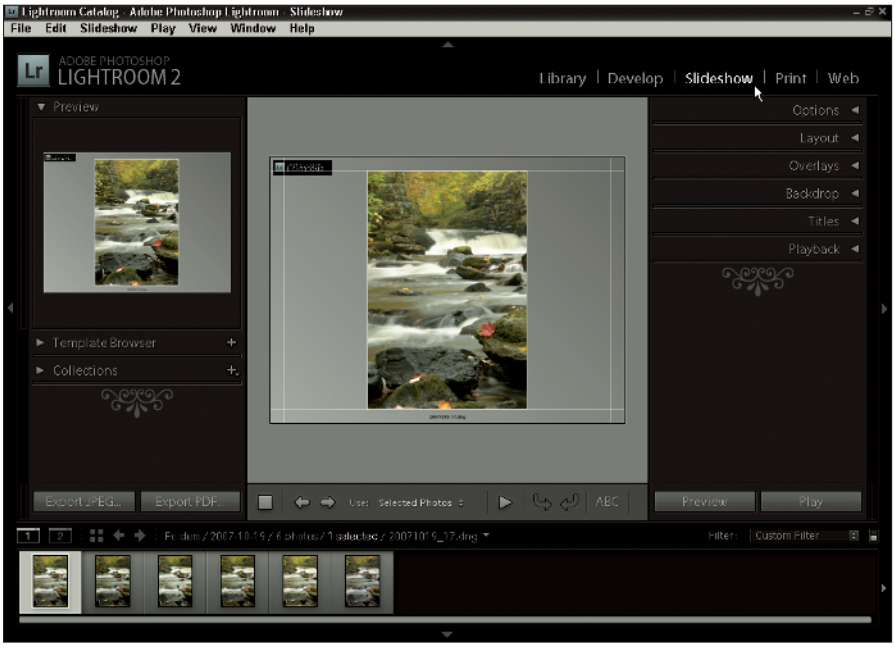

Figure 1-3: The Slideshow module.

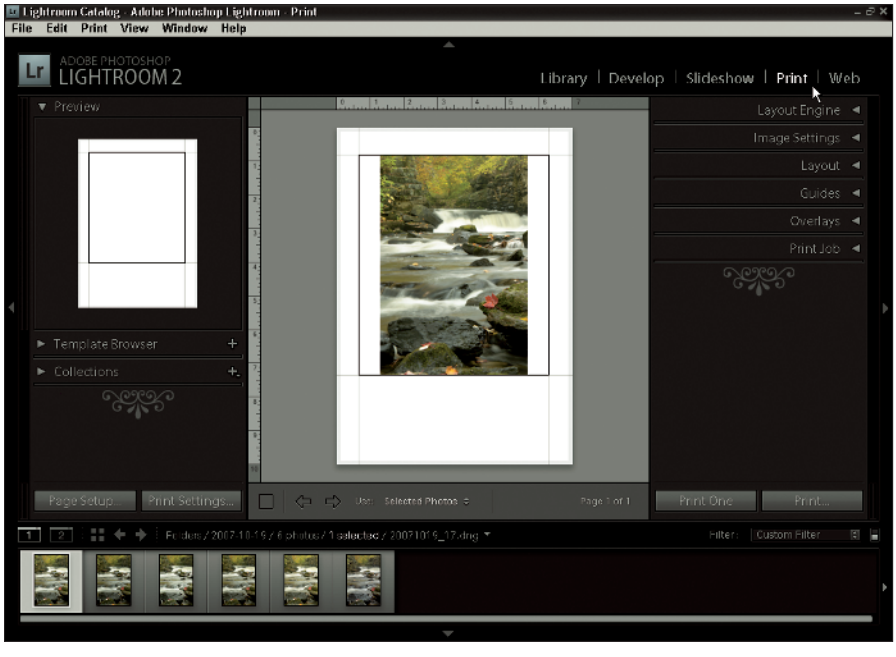

Figure 1-4: The Print module.

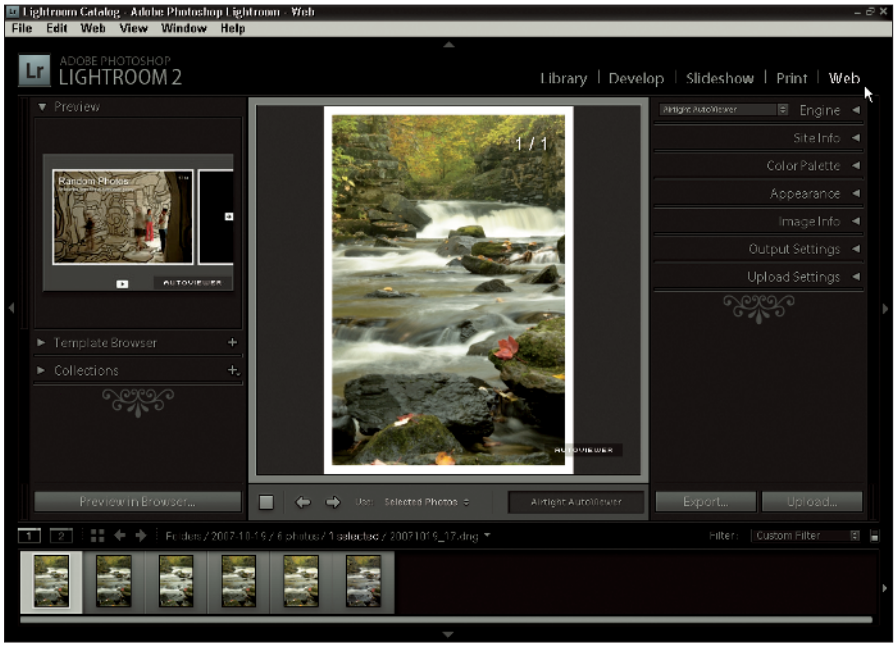

Figure 1-5: The Web module.

What the modules have in common

Having all modules share parts of a common interface might make it harder (at first glance) to tell which module is which, but I wouldn't worry too much about that. Clarity will reign supreme when you have Lightroom up and running. Think of it this way: A common interface is in fact one of Lightroom's greatest strengths because keeping the same interface means you don't have to spend time learning five different interfaces! The interface behaves the same and shares the same basic structure no matter where you are.

Check out Figure 1-6 to see what I mean. The Library module shown there sports the following standard interface components — components that each module shares:

- **The Title bar:** Provides an at-a-glance view of the name of the catalog and the module you're in.
- **The Menu bar:** The go-to place for all the commands needed for each module's tasks.
- **The Module Picker:** An easy method to pick the module you want to work with. This area of the interface is also home to the Identity Plate on the left, which you can customize to insert your own graphic, as well as the progress meter that appears when Lightroom performs a task. (For more on the Identity Plate, check out Chapter 5.)
- **The Left Panel group:** Although the content varies with each module, the panels to the left of the interface are generally functions that involve accessing, grouping, and previewing photos and templates.
- **The Right Panel group:** The panels to the right of the interface also vary with each module, but this is where you find controls for adjusting and tweaking.
- **The Toolbar:** Each module has its own set of tools, but the Toolbar is a staple of every module.
- **The Filmstrip:** At the bottom of every module, you always find the Filmstrip, which displays thumbnails of the image grouping you are working with. It also is home to a row of tools — right there along the top — that put a lot of things at your fingertips no matter what module you are in:
  - *Main and Second Window controls.* Click and hold either of these window icons to access a number of shortcuts for controlling each window (more details on the second window function later in the chapter).
  - *Jump to Grid view icon.* No matter where you are in Lightroom, one click takes you to Grid view in the Library module.

- *Go Back and Forward buttons.* Allow you to navigate between previously selected image groupings (folders, collections, searches) you have been viewing.
- *Filmstrip Source Indicator.* Provides an at-a-glance view of the current image grouping and active photo. Click the drop-down arrow at the end for quick access to the special collections found in the Catalog panel as well as a list of recently visited folders and collections.
- *Filters.* When clicked, the Filter label expands to reveal ways to filter the current image grouping by flag, rating, or color label. The Custom Filter drop-down menu provides quick access to all of the Filter Bar options. The last button on the right toggles filtering on and off.

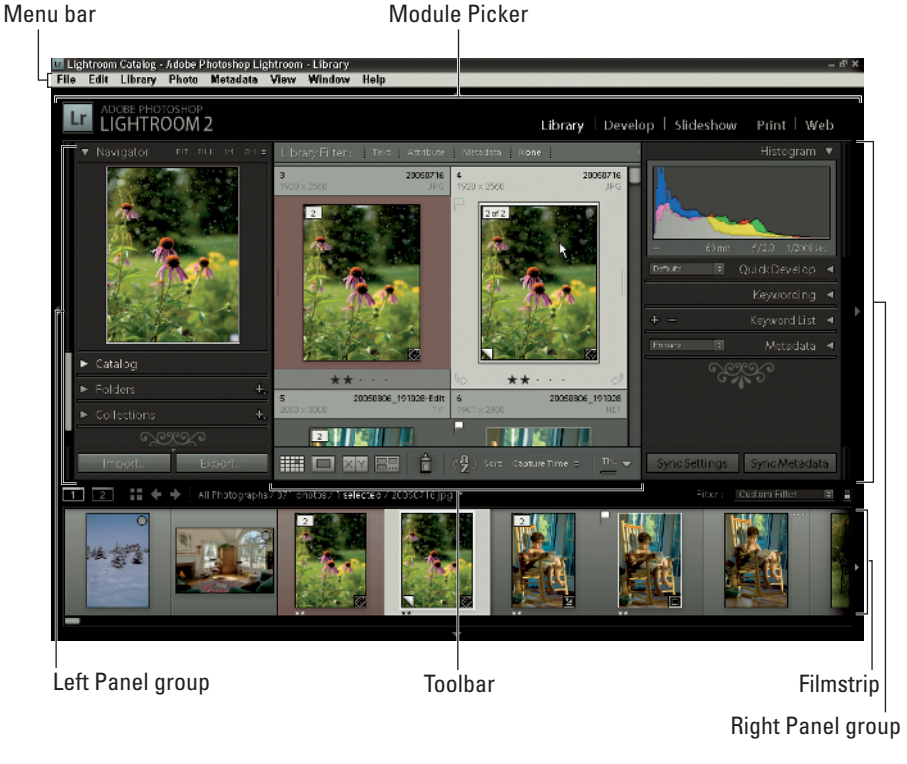

Figure 1-6: The interface components.

Controlling the interface

Lightroom's interface has a number of options for reducing and simplifying the workspace. Here's an example: My publishers forced me to capture the images of Lightroom in this book at a screen resolution of 1024 x 768 (don't ask me why), so things are looking a little cramped. No way would I work at this resolution, though — I'd naturally bump it up to the highest resolution my monitor supports so I could have as much space to work with as possible. However, sometimes there's just not enough room for everything the interface has to offer — usually those times when you really just want to give as much screen real estate to your photos as possible. Imagine trying to work on a project in your shop and being forced to lay all your tools in neat rows on the workbench — I guess it's handy, but you surely won't have as much space as you'd like for the project you're working on. Lightroom has some pretty clever ways of tweaking how your tools are displayed so you can maximize the size of your workspace.

The simplest way to maximize space is to take advantage of working in Full Screen mode. Just like any application you currently use, you're just a keystroke away from maximizing Lightroom to fill the available screen. The neat thing about Lightroom, though, is that it takes this maximizing business a step further by providing two separate Full Screen modes in addition to the Standard Screen mode:

- **Full Screen with Menu:** With this option, Lightroom expands to fill the screen and hide its title bar to gain more space. The Menu bar jumps to the top of the screen. Note that the standard Minimize, Maximize, and Close buttons vanish from the top of the window in this mode.
- **Full Screen:** With this option, Lightroom expands to take over the screen completely. The Menu bar disappears and the taskbar in Windows (the Dock on a Mac) isn't accessible.
- **Standard Screen:** All options are visible and the Lightroom interface can be resized and moved by grabbing the edge of the window just like any other application.

To switch between the three screen modes just press the F key to jump from one view to another. Keep in mind, though, that if it appears as if you "lost" the Minimize, Maximize, and Close buttons at the top of the window (the horror!), what's really happened is that you've simply entered one of the Full Screen modes. (I can't tell you how many panicked e-mails I've received from folks who believe they've somehow lopped off said buttons by mistake, asking whether I could please help them get back their buttons.)

If you still want more space, you can take advantage of the collapsible nature of the Module Picker, Panel groups, and Filmstrip. Refer back to Figure 1-6 for a sec. Do you see the small arrow in the center of the outer edge of each side of the interface? Clicking an arrow once causes that panel to "hide" from view. Now, move your cursor away and then back over any part of that edge and the hidden panel returns, giving you access to the contents of the panel

until you move the cursor away again! This is called "Auto Hide & Show." Right-click (Control+click on a Mac) an arrow and you can see the other possible choices:

- **Auto Hide:** When enabled, that panel automatically hides when you move your cursor away from it, but it won't show again until you click the arrow. I personally like this option because the Auto Show kicking in every time I get to close to the edge tends to drive me nuts.
- **Manual:** No Auto Hiding or Showing. Click an arrow to hide and it stays that way until you click again.
- **Sync with opposite panel:** When checked, the settings you apply to one panel will be equally applied to the panel on the opposite side.

I find a more convenient method for showing and hiding these screen elements is the keyboard shortcuts:

- **F5:** Show/hide the Module Picker.
- **F6:** Show/hide the Filmstrip.
- **F7:** Show/hide the Left Panel group.
- **F8:** Show/hide the Right Panel group.
- **Tab:** Show/hide both the Left and Right panel groups.
- **Shift+Tab:** Show/hide the Left, Right, Top and Bottom.

When it comes to clearing the clutter and focusing on your photos, Lightroom has one further cool trick up its sleeve. It's called Lights Out mode and has three states:

- **Lights On:** The normal operating condition, where everything is visible.
- **Lights Dim:** In this mode, your selected photos remain unchanged but the surrounding interface dims. Although dimmed, the interface is accessible and functional (if you know where things are).
- **Lights Out:** Taking the dim view to the extreme, the entire interface is blacked out and only your photos are visible. The ultimate way to reduce clutter!

You can jump through each Lights Out mode by pressing the L key. You set the amount of dimming and the color the screen dims to in the preferences (I cover all the preference settings a little later in the chapter).

Using the secondary display view

The ultimate way to gain more screen real estate is to add another screen! Dual monitor support is a new addition in Lightroom 2.0 and a most welcome one at that. Lightroom's approach to dual monitor support is the addition of

a second Lightroom window that you can move to your second monitor. The result is that you have the same primary Lightroom window on one monitor (this is where you access all the modules and do your work) and then your secondary display window provides additional ways to view the photos you are working on. (While it's possible to enable the secondary window on a single monitor system, it is limited in its usefulness as it competes for the same screen real estate as the primary window.)

The secondary display window functions in the same manner with all Lightroom modules. Here are the options available in the secondary window:

- **Grid:** By using the Grid option, you essentially extend the Filmstrip to the second window so that it provides greater access to all the thumbnails of the current group of photos. The secondary window Grid view functions the same as Grid view in the Library module (see Chapter 5 for more information on Grid view).
- **Loupe:** Allows for viewing a single image in its entirety or zoomed in close within the second window. Loupe has three options:
  - *Normal:* Always displays the active photo selected in the primary window.
  - *Live:* Continually displays the photo under the cursor as you move over photos in the main window.
  - *Locked:* Allows you to choose one photo to display continuously in the second window while you view a different photo in the primary window.
- **Compare:** Allows you to compare two or more photos side by side. The secondary window Compare view functions the same way as Compare view in the Library module. (See Chapter 6 for more information on Compare view.)
- **Survey:** Allows you to view multiple photos side by side within the secondary window. The secondary window Survey view functions the same way as Survey view in the Library module. (See Chapter 6 for more information on Survey view.)
- **Slideshow:** Only available when you have the secondary window set to full screen (not possible on a single monitor system). This option allows you to run the slideshow on the secondary display.

There is one other cool option related to the secondary window called Show Second Monitor Preview. (It only works when the secondary window is in full screen mode.) When enabled, it provides a small preview window showing what's being displayed in the secondary window. Huh? It's intended for situations where you might have your secondary monitor facing away from you and toward an audience. This way you can be showing photos to an audience on the secondary display while you work on the primary display, and the preview window lets you have a peek at what your audience is seeing.

You can enable and disable the second window by clicking its icon on the Filmstrip, choosing Window➪Second Window➪Enable from the main menu, or by pressing F11 (⌘+F11 on a Mac).

Getting Up and Running

I'm sure you're chomping at the bit for the opportunity to roll up your sleeves and start putting Lightroom through its paces. I don't blame you! You're gonna love it. However, if you take the time to lay the groundwork so that you get all your ducks in a row, you're sure to start on the right foot (could I cram in any more metaphors?).

Preparing for installation

Don't think of an application installation as being a tiresome chore. Rather, think of it is a perfect excuse to do a little hard disk housekeeping. What better time to do tasks like the following:

- **Freeing up disk space by deleting unused files, clearing caches, moving files to another disk, and emptying the Trash**
- **Running an error-checking application**
- **Running a defragmentation application (Windows only)**

The best reason to clean house before installing is that it might just prevent problems that you'd likely blame on the new application you just installed. So save yourself some aggravation and run those programs now while you're busy reading this book!

I assume you've confirmed that your system meets the posted minimum requirements before you purchased Lightroom (or downloaded the trial), but generally, it's always in your best interest to exceed the minimum whenever possible for best performance. Here's what matters most:

- **RAM:** Maximizing the amount of installed RAM is probably going to give you the most bang for your buck. It's more than likely that you'll be running other applications alongside Lightroom, so the more RAM you have the better for everyone.
- **Processor:** Processing large volumes of huge files takes horsepower. Lightroom is able to take advantage of multi-core processors, so if an upgrade is in your future, put that under consideration.
- **Disk space:** When working with digital images, you just can't have enough disk space. If you're shooting raw on a 10-, 12-, 17+-megapixel camera, you don't want to worry about running out of storage space. Beyond storage, you need ample free space on your startup drive so that all your applications and your operating system have enough elbow

room to function. I like using 500 GB external drives because they are relatively inexpensive, and easy to add and remove.

- **Monitor:** You might think you're looking at your photos, but you are in fact looking at your monitor. (I actually don't want to think about how many hours in a day I spend basking in its glow.) For the benefit of your eyes and the quality of your editing, consider a monitor upgrade in your future. The truth is, the monitors that typically come bundled with most computers are better suited to word processing, Web browsing, and e-mail. Your choices will be limited to LCD-type monitors (the thin flat kind) as they just don't make the CRT-type monitors (the big TV-like kind) anymore. This is probably a good time to call in a friend to help you shop if you're not sure where to start, but here are a few things to keep in mind:
  - *Price:* Quality in a monitor doesn't come cheap. At the high end, you could look at models from Eizo and LaCie, although many people I know are quite happy on the higher end with Dell and Apple. The technology is improving and prices are falling.
  - *Size:* Bigger is usually better. Your monitor is your desk space. The bigger your desk, the easier it is to work. 19" - 30" are pretty typical for photo work.
  - *Resolution:* A monitor's resolution is expressed by how many pixels across by how many pixels down it can display (such as 1024 x 768). The larger the number, the more pixels will be displayed, which means the more room you have to work, but it also means things will appear smaller. Huh? Here's why. The actual size of the monitor (the inches across) can't change, right? So the only thing that can change is the size of the pixels. The more pixels you add in, the smaller they have to get to fit. A high-resolution monitor might have a resolution of 1920 x 1200. You really have a lot of screen real estate at that resolution. 1920 x 1200 on a 24" monitor is a nice size to work with. 1920 x 1200 on a 17" monitor requires keen eyesight or glasses.
  - *Graphics card:* This is the part of your computer that drives the video display. You need to have a powerful-enough graphics card to run your monitor at its native size. You don't want to cart home a monitor your system can't handle. Have all your computer's specifications with you when you shop and ask the salespeople what you will need.

Installing Lightroom is straightforward, whether you download the files from Adobe's Web site or have a disk. You're going to be doing the standard things, like double-clicking the installer file, accepting the end user license agreement, and following the on-screen prompts. You know the drill. I suggest installing in the default location and simply following along with the installation instructions. I also highly recommend taking a few seconds to skim the Lightroom

Read Me file included with the installation files. It contains all the basic need-to-know information about installing the software. It's a good first place to check if you encounter any problems installing or running the application.

Configuring your settings

Lightroom's default preference settings are very good for getting you up and running, but that doesn't mean there aren't a few tweaks that could suit your workflow a little better. You adjust the seat or mirrors in your car every now and then, right? You'll probably want to do the same with Lightroom.

To see what's what with your default settings, first open the Preferences dialog box by choosing Edit➪Preferences (Lightroom➪Preferences on a Mac) from the main menu or by using the keyboard shortcut Ctrl+, (⌘+, on a Mac). The Preferences dialog box appears on-screen in all its glory, as shown in Figure 1-7. What you see here are global preference settings, meaning these preferences are in effect regardless of which *catalog* — which Lightroom database file, in other words — you have open. Although many of these preferences are self-explanatory, a few are worth digging into. I do the digging for you in the next few sections.

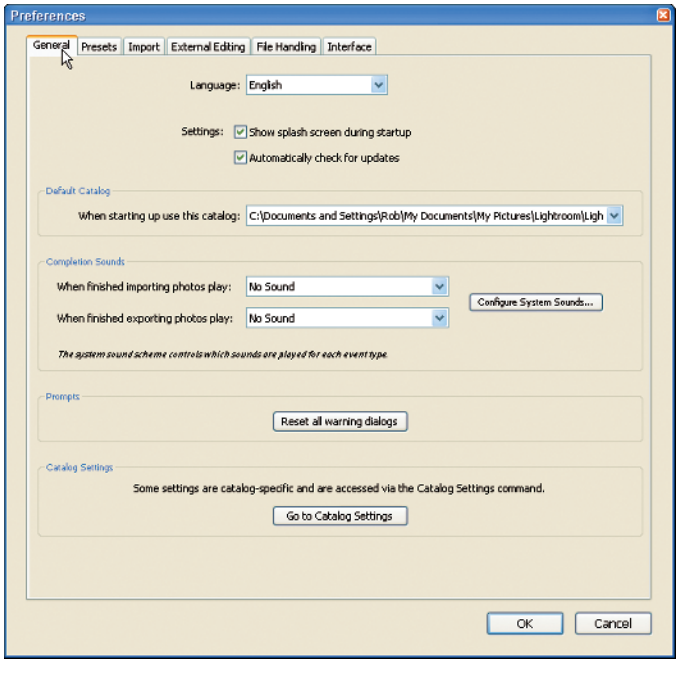

Figure 1-7: The Preferences dialog box.

General preferences

The General preferences tab is kind of like the catchall drawer in the kitchen; it's got all the stuff that didn't fit neatly anywhere else.

- **Language:** Choose the language you want Lightroom to use for its menus and options.
- **Settings:** Here you can choose to tweak two settings: whether the fancy startup screen appears every time you fire up Lightroom and whether Lightroom checks for software updates automatically. The fancy startup screen? That's a personal preference, and I leave that choice up to you. The automatic updates stuff is a bit different. If you cast your mind back to the first time you ran Lightroom, you'll remember that you were asked if you wanted Lightroom to keep track of (and automatically install) any software updates that might come down the pike. If you at first said, "No, thanks" but have since changed your mind, you can enable (or disable) automatic software updates here.

  Software updates aren't minor things, nor are they uncommon. Over the course of the life of Lightroom version 1, there were some significant bug fixes and functionality enhancements released as updates, along with support for newer camera models and their raw file formats. All such fixes and enhancements were made available as software updates.

  Lots of folks like the idea of having Lightroom keep track of any software updates, but if you'd rather be in control of when your applications phone home, then be sure to periodically choose Help➪Check from the main menu to check for updates.
- **Default catalog:** I cover the use of multiple catalogs in Chapter 2, but in most cases, setting the default catalog to your specific catalog file ensures you always open the same catalog file no matter what.
- **Completion sounds:** The settings for completion sounds are pretty straightforward and entirely personal. Audible prompts are helpful when you start a big import or export and then busy yourself with some other task and just want a little notice of when Lightroom has finished the process.
- **Prompts:** These are the warning dialogs that pop up when you attempt to do things like move photos or folders. Some prompts have a Don't Show Again option to disable them from appearing in the future, which is great when you find the warning prompts slow you down. However, they can help keep you out of trouble, so if you change your mind and want to enable them again, click the Reset All Warning Dialogs button to bring them back.
- **Catalog settings:** The Catalog Settings button is a holdover from version 1, but is worth mentioning. Keep in mind that Lightroom has essentially two types of preference settings: Those that are *global,* meaning they affect the operation of the program (regardless of what catalog is open), and those that are *catalog specific,* which control certain aspects of how

each catalog functions. The catalog-specific preferences have moved to the Catalog Settings dialog box, which you can access by clicking the Go to Catalog Settings button or by choosing File➪Catalog Settings (Lightroom➪Catalog Settings on a Mac) from the main menu.

The Presets preferences

The Presets tab is shown in Figure 1-8. This is one-stop shopping for all the settings that pertain to Lightroom's default presets and templates, and is broken into three sections, as follows:

- **Default Develop Settings:** These four check boxes control Lightroom's default behavior when it comes to processing photos:
  - *Apply Auto Tone Adjustments:* This setting attempts to automatically adjust the exposure, blacks, brightness, and contrast for best results. The Lightroom team has greatly improved the Auto Tone setting in Lightroom 2, but I wouldn't apply it as a default until you've had some time to test it on your photos to see if you like what it does. If you find it creates a favorable starting point, you can always come back here and enable it.
  - *Apply Auto Grayscale Mix When Converting to Grayscale:* If you use Lightroom to convert to grayscale, you can check this box to let Lightroom take a stab at the best conversion settings, or leave it unchecked and start with the Grayscale Mix sliders zeroed out. Lightroom actually does a pretty good job, so I leave this one checked.
  - *Make Defaults Specific to Camera Serial Number:* If you customize the Camera Calibration tab (see Chapter 8) you can check this box to have the customization apply to each specific camera serial number instead of just by camera model. You'll likely leave this unchecked.
  - *Make Defaults Specific to Camera ISO Setting:* If you customize the Camera Calibration tab (see Chapter 8) you can check this box to have the customization apply to each specific ISO setting instead of the same for all ISO settings. You'll likely leave this unchecked.
- **Location:** By default, Lightroom stores all your presets in a central location that's accessible to any catalog you might have open at the time. This makes the most sense for most Lightroom users. However, if you'd prefer to store your presets folder within the same folder as your catalog file, you can check this box and Lightroom will move them over. Click the Show Lightroom Presets Folder button for quick access to your preset files.
- **Lightroom Defaults:** This collection of buttons serves a single purpose, which is to set each type of preset collection back to its default state. If presets ever seem to go missing, come back here and click the button that corresponds to the type of missing preset.

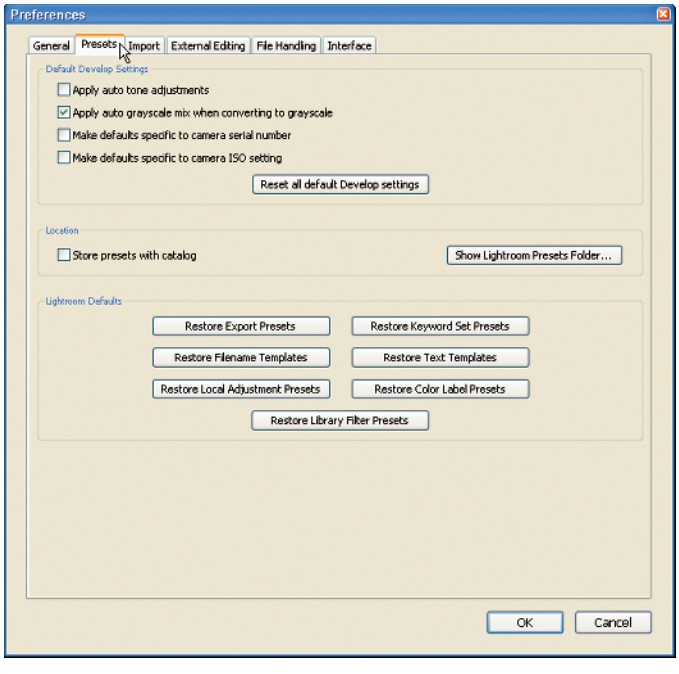

Figure 1-8: The Presets preferences.

The Import preferences

The Import preferences tab, shown in Figure 1-9, controls the settings Lightroom uses when importing photos into your catalog. Here are your choices:

- **Show Import Dialog When a Memory Card is Detected:** I find it very helpful to leave this check box selected because I use Lightroom exclusively for managing my digital photos, so I always want the Import dialog box to open when I pop a card in my card reader. That said, if you find that the dialog box is getting in your way, then by all means uncheck this option and launch the import process manually.
- **Ignore Camera-generated Folder Names When Naming Folders:** I don't know why anyone would want to use the folder names created by their cameras when writing files to the memory cards because such names usually only make sense to the cameras. I recommend keeping this option checked and relying on your own folder-naming scheme.
- **Treat JPEG Files Next to Raw Files as Separate Photos:** By using Lightroom, I no longer find shooting Raw+JPG useful and I prefer having more room on my memory cards for more raw files. (Raw+JPG just doesn't work for me because the way Lightroom renders your raw files

won't always match the JPG from the camera.) However, if reasons or habit dictate that you shoot Raw+JPG and you want to import them both as separate files into Lightroom (so that you can work with both versions), then check this box. Otherwise, Lightroom treats the JPEG files as a type of sidecar file and won't display them within Lightroom.

- **Import DNG Creation:** These settings pertain to the Copy Photos as Digital Negative (DNG) and Add to Catalog Import option. The lowercase file extension is the norm, so there's no reason to change it. The medium size JPEG preview is a good compromise on file size. The default conversion method settings are great because they preserve the raw data and create a smaller file using lossless compression. The big choice is if you want to embed the original raw file or not. You would want to embed the original raw file if you felt there may come a point in time where you might want to extract the original raw file so that you could process it in software that doesn't work with DNG. The downside to embedding the original raw file is that you double the file's size because you will have the converted raw data (this is what Lightroom will use) and then will add the entire original unaltered file as well (which just sits untouched in case some day it is needed). I prefer to leave this unchecked.

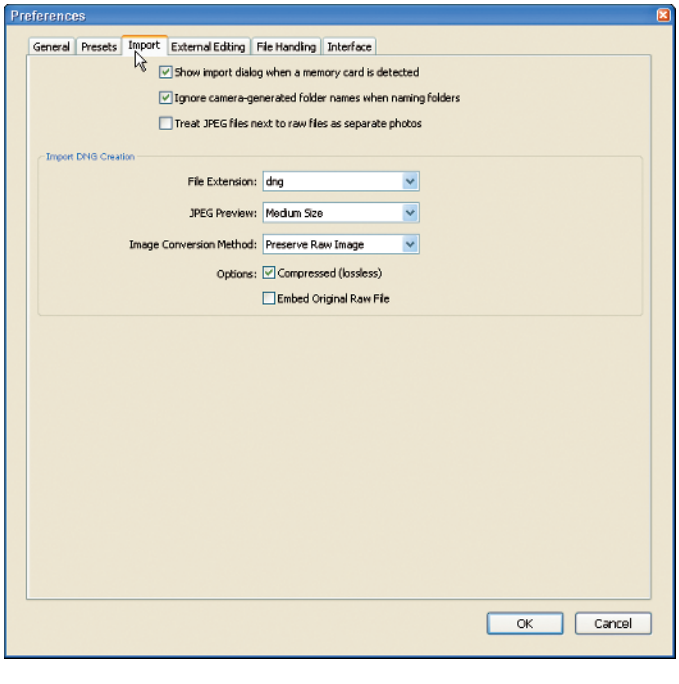

Figure 1-9: The Import preferences.

The External Editing preferences

If you have Photoshop or Photoshop Elements installed, you'll see, as shown in Figure 1-10, that it's configured as your primary external editor. (In my case, it is Photoshop CS3.) You can also configure other applications to have additional editors. However, if you don't have Photoshop or Photoshop Elements installed, you'll only be able to configure the Additional Editor option, as the first slot is reserved exclusively for the two Adobe products.

The purpose of this dialog box is to configure the default settings Lightroom uses when you send a copy of a photo with Lightroom adjustments to an external editor for additional work. Remember, Lightroom never alters your source photos, so if you want to take all the work you have done in Lightroom and apply it to a file so that you can continue working in a different application, then Lightroom has to create a copy of that photo first. These are the settings Lightroom uses to create that copy. You'll also configure what applications (if any) you want to use as an additional editor in this dialog box.

All external editors have the same basic file-setting options (File Format, Color Space, Bit Depth, Resolution, and Compression) to be configured. You do need to configure both editors independently, but this gives you the opportunity to set up each editor differently. The options you choose are going to be determined by your own needs and the type of editor you are using. After giving you a closer look at the file options, I'll go over the steps for adding additional editors. Here are the file options:

- **File Format:** You have two file format options to choose from — TIFF and PSD. Both formats support layers, 16-bit files, and available color spaces. PSD is Photoshop's native file format, but it's a proprietary format and not as widely supported outside the Adobe family of applications. In light of this, my preference is to use TIFF, but there's no wrong choice here.
- **Color Space:** You can find out more about color spaces in Chapter 3, but in a nutshell, a *color space* is a way to define a range of colors so that those colors can be accurately reproduced on different systems. Lightroom has an internal color space that contains all the colors your camera can capture. Any time Lightroom creates an actual rendered copy of your source files, it converts that file from Lightroom's internal color space to the output color space you've chosen. You have three color spaces to choose from:
    - *ProPhoto RGB:* A 16-bit color space capable of holding all the colors captured by your camera, ProPhoto RGB is very similar to Lightroom's working color space, and therefore, the recommended setting.
    - *AdobeRGB (1998):* An 8-bit color space without as many colors as ProPhoto RGB, AdobeRGB (1998) is a common color space for digital photographers who are used to shooting JPG. This is your best choice if you choose 8 bit in the Bit Depth drop-down list.

- *sRGB:* Also an 8-bit color space, but with fewer saturated colors than Adobe RGB, sRGB has its place as an output color space, but it isn't a good choice when sending files to be edited in Photoshop.

- **Bit Depth:** This setting determines how much data is contained in a file. The more bits the more information. The more information the better for editing purposes. 16 bit is the recommended option if you're working with raw files. 8 bit is recommended if you're working with JPG.
- **Resolution:** Ultimately, the resolution setting only comes into play when you are printing. In this context, it simply sets the resolution tag in the new file's metadata so that it is there if needed. It doesn't affect the number of pixels in the file whatsoever. You'll see 240 as the default setting; however, if your workflow requires that files have a different resolution setting (such as 300) then you can enter that here.
- **Compression:** This option is only available when TIFF is selected as the file format. ZIP is a lossless compression format. Your choices here are to use no compression (None) or apply compression (ZIP). Some other applications have trouble handling compressed TIFFs, so if you want a more compatible choice, choose None. If you want to save a bit of disk space, then choose ZIP.

Setting up additional external editors

In Lightroom 1, you could only choose one additional editor, but that functionality has been expanded to allow for multiple additional editors. In a nutshell, you choose an editor, configure its settings, and then save those settings as a preset. You can create as many presets as you need. Here are the steps:

1. **In the Additional External Editor section, click the Choose button.**
2. **Navigate to and select the application you want to use as an editor.**

   You'll see the name of this application listed next to Application back in the Preferences dialog box.
3. **Configure all the file-setting options for the type of files you want to send to that editor.**
4. **Choose Save Current Settings as New Preset from the Preset drop-down menu.**
5. **Give the preset a name and click Create.**

   You'll see this name listed under the Photo➪Edit in the menu so make it descriptive of both the application and file settings.

You can repeat those steps for any additional editors or configuration of settings for the same editor.

When Lightroom renders a copy to send to Photoshop, it appends a `-Edit` suffix to the copy by default. You can customize this suffix in the Edit Externally File Naming section at the bottom of the dialog box, but I'd say, unless you have a real need to change the suffix, the default works just fine.

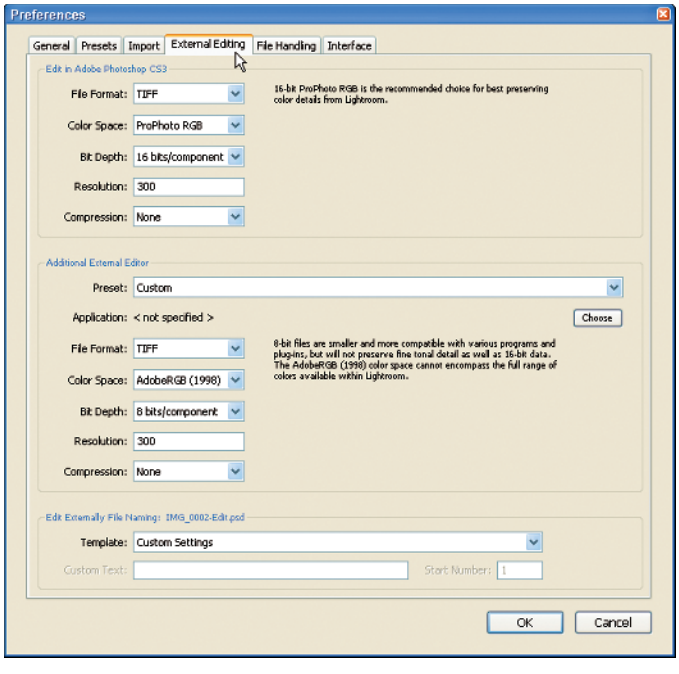

Figure 1-10: The External Editing preferences.

The File Handling preferences

Figure 1-11 shows the File Handling preference settings. This is another one of those catchall collections of settings, so let me go through each section and make some sense of what can be done here:

- **Reading Metadata:** It is possible to create structure or hierarchies in your keywords (i.e., you might have a keyword "Animal" and then under it you would nest all the types of animals in your photos). There's no single standard for what character must be used to separate hierarchical keywords when they are written into a file's metadata. Lightroom automatically recognizes the | (pipe) character between two words as a means to denote structure, but if you use other programs that use either a . (dot) or a / (slash) as a keyword separator, then check the respective boxes in the preferences; Lightroom respects your choice during import as well, so that your keyword structure is maintained.
- **File Name Generation:** Different operating systems and even different applications can have problems with certain characters being used within filenames. The settings in the File Name Generation section allow you to configure how Lightroom responds to these characters when it encounters them in a filename. Here's what I recommend for creating

a consistent and bombproof approach to dealing with problematic filenames:

- Choose the largest set of characters to treat as illegal.
- Choose either dashes or underscores to be used as a replacement character when an illegal character is encountered.
- Choose the same character you chose in Step 2 to be used as a replacement for any spaces found in a filename.

- **Camera Raw Cache Settings:** The intended purpose of any cache is to store (usually temporarily) frequently accessed data to speed up the processes that require that data to function. In this case, Lightroom shares a cache with Adobe Camera Raw, with the primary purpose of helping Lightroom reopen files in the Develop module faster. The default setting is a good compromise between size of the cache and benefit from its use. If you have a drive with a lot of free space, or if you just want to move the cache from its default location, you can click the Choose button and select a different disk. Click the Purge Cache button to clear it and regain space on that disk.

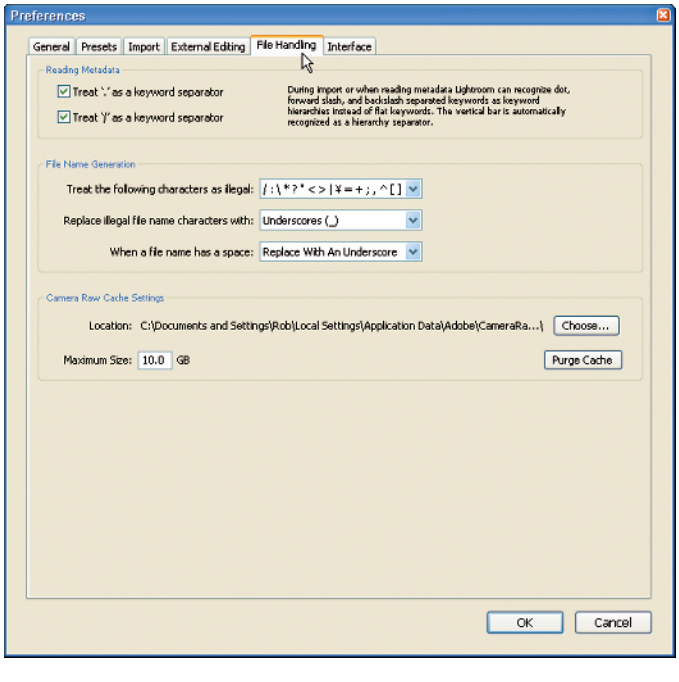

Figure 1-11: The File Handling preferences.

The Interface preferences

Although some of the Interface preferences, as shown in Figure 1-12, are entirely cosmetic, there are some really useful settings here as well:

- **Panels:** I'll leave the Panel End Mark (refer to Figure 1-6 to see the default end mark) decision up to your own sense of flair, but these little decorative icons appear at the bottom of the panel groups in each module and for the most part you won't notice them after awhile (you can even turn them off). In regards to panel font size, if you're finding the panel text a little on the small side, you can try bumping it up a notch. It might not be much, but it's all you can do. Change the Panel Font Size setting to Large and it will take effect the next time you start Lightroom.
- **Lights Out:** I went over the Lights Out function a little earlier in this chapter (press L to cycle through Lights Out modes), but here are its configuration settings. The Dim Level controls how much the Screen Color changes at the first level of dimming (at 80% you can just make out the interface). The defaults work pretty well, but you can increase or decrease the first dim level amount by changing the percentage, or change the color used to hide the interface to different shades of gray.
- **Background:** The area around the photo — but inside the panels — is called the background. The default color is medium gray because that's a neutral color that will have the least influence on how you perceive the colors in your photo. You might try different colors, but I think you'll come back to the default. I'm not sure why there is an option to add an overlay texture to the background, but there is one if you'd like to try it. Perhaps you are the one person who wished there was a way to add pinstripes to the background?
- **Filmstrip:** When it comes to the Filmstrip settings, I prefer to keep all four of these options checked. I like being able to see ratings (the number of stars assigned), picks (the flag states you can assign), and badges (small icons that appear if keywords, cropping, or develop settings have been applied to a photo) on the thumbnails in the Filmstrip. Additionally, the Image Info tooltips are a great way to see the filename, capture date and time, and dimensions; just hover over an image with your cursor.

- **Tweaks:** The Tweaks section is the one area of the Interface preferences where you'll see a slight difference between Windows and Mac. On the Mac, you find an option to use typographic fractions, but if you wander over to a Windows machine, you find that such fractions aren't available. Therefore, Mac users can have their exposure fractions expressed in a much cuter manner. Don't take this as an unassailable argument for switching platforms, however. Especially because Windows users have a tweak that Mac does not — the Use System Preference for Font Smoothing option. What it means is that Lightroom, on Windows, applies font smoothing (meaning it literally makes the edges of screen fonts appear smoother and rounder) independently of the operating system. So, if you

intentionally turned off font smoothing at the operating system level (some people don't like the smooth look) and you want Lightroom to follow suit, then check the Use System Preference for Font Smoothing box.

Both operating systems have a setting in common, though — Zoom Clicked Point to Center. By checking this option, you're telling Lightroom to zoom in and shift the point you clicked to the center of the screen. I prefer to leave this unchecked because when I click to zoom in, I want the point I clicked to remain under my cursor. When Zoom Clicked Point to Center is enabled, the point you click will instead zoom and shift to the center. Give it a test drive if you wish, but I think you'll agree unchecked is better.

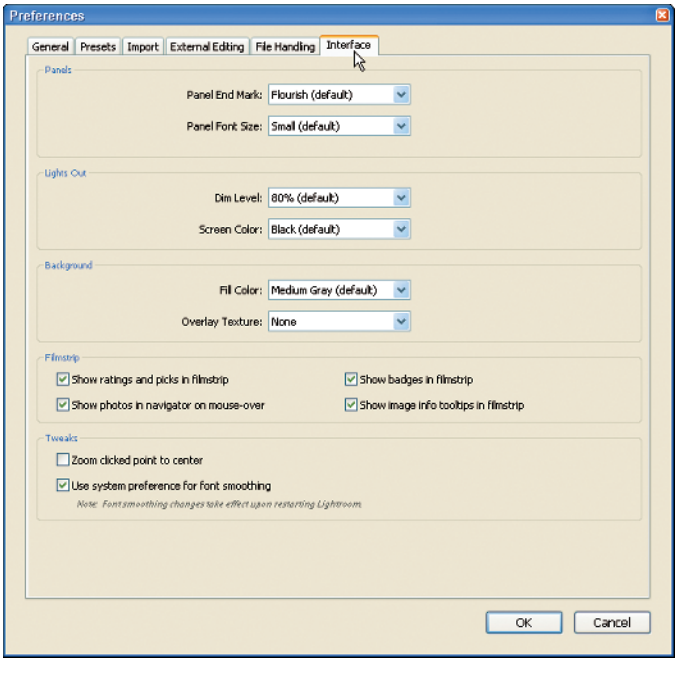

Figure 1-12: The Interface preferences.