



Chapter 1

# GETTING ORGANIZED



Photo by Mark Fitzgerald

Photoshop has forever changed the way the photographic postproduction process is carried out. Image modifications that were unthinkable only a few years ago are easily accomplished in only a few minutes. Now a skilled Photoshop user is limited only by her imagination.

However, this digital dream can quickly turn into a nightmare when important files are hard to locate or when they completely disappear. Because of that, it's important to build an organized system that ensures every file is stored in an appropriate place, and that each is backed up in the event of a hard-drive crash.

## UNDERSTANDING FILE FORMATS

Adobe Photoshop CS5 works with a variety of file formats. Most are created when edited files are saved with the Save As command. Figure 1-1 shows the options available in the Format pop-up menu. Choices here determine the kind of file that is created during saving. Be aware that this set of options is available only when saving an 8-bit file because 16-bit files can only be saved in a few formats.

### X-REF

Bit depth is discussed in Chapter 8.

People who deal with digital photography don't generally use all of these file formats. I work with lots of professional photographers and typically, they use four file formats 99 percent of the time: RAW, PSD, TIFF, or JPEG.

### RAW

RAW is a special type of file format that's used to capture images with dSLR cameras and some point-and-shoot cameras. The reason RAW is special is it contains a vast amount of information — almost as

much as the camera's sensor can record. Most serious photographers are shooting in the RAW format because they want the largest amount of information available to them when they open a file for editing.

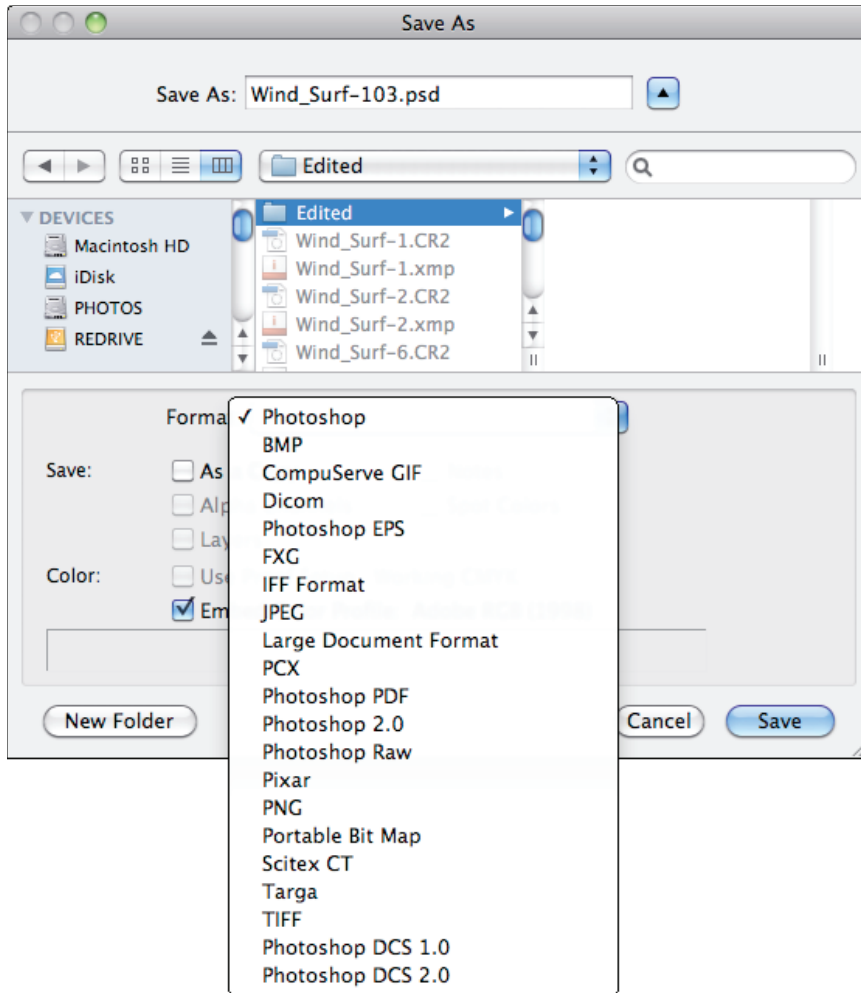
Because this book is concerned with repairing and perfecting photos during the editing process, I don't go into the RAW file format in detail. However, I do want to make a couple of important points. The first thing to be aware of is that each camera manufacturer has its own proprietary RAW file format. For example, Canon cameras use CR2 and Nikon cameras use NEF.

The second thing to be aware of is that the RAW format is strictly a *capture format*. This means that it's only used to capture images in-camera. When a RAW file is opened for editing, it must go through a conversion process in order to get it into Photoshop. This conversion process is handled by special software such as Adobe Camera Raw, which comes with Photoshop CS5.

Take a close look at Figure 1-1, and you'll notice that there is no CR2 option for saving. After a RAW file is open in Photoshop, it must be saved as a different file format — usually PSD, TIFF, or JPEG. One of the effects of this is that it prevents you from inadvertently overwriting an original RAW file. Cool, huh? You may notice an option in the Format section of the Save As dialog box called Photoshop Raw. This isn't a standard RAW file format. Photoshop Raw is used as a flexible file format for transferring files from one computer platform to another (Mac, PC, Unix, and so on) or between more exotic image editing applications, such as those used for high-end animation.

### X-REF

To learn more about the RAW file format see *Adobe Camera Raw For Digital Photographers Only* by Rob Sheppard.



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## PSD

PSD is Photoshop's proprietary default file format. It supports more Photoshop features than JPEG or TIFF. In fact, the only other file format that supports as many features is the Large Document Format (PSB), but that's a file format I've never needed. One of the big advantages of working with PSD is that other Adobe products like Illustrator can open PSD files and access all the saved features. This makes life easier for people who move back and forth between Adobe software applications.

A special option can be set in Photoshop's preferences that maximizes PSD file compatibility when saving. With this option turned on, a composite version of all the individual image layers in the image is embedded in the file so that other non-Adobe applications, as well as earlier versions of Photoshop, can display a composite preview of the image. This option is especially important if you use Lightroom as part of your workflow because Lightroom can't catalog a PSD file unless it contains one of these composite previews. The only minor downside to embedding a preview is that the PSD file is a bit larger because of the embedded composite.

Layers are covered in detail in Chapter 4.

Here's how to set this preference so that a composite preview is always embedded in your PSD files:

1. Go to Photoshop's Preferences. Choose Edit/⇧ Preferences⇧ General⇧ File Handling.
2. Under Maximize PSD and PSB File Compatibility, click the pop-up as shown in Figure 1-2. Select Always, and click OK. If you want to make the compatibility choice on a case-by-case basis, choose Ask. Then Photoshop asks you if you want to save a composite before saving a new PSD file.

One of the big advantages to using PSD is that all layer information is preserved and stored. When the image is opened, it goes to the state that it was in when it was last saved. All the layers are there, and the last

active layer is still active. When you work extensively with layers, as you do in much of this book, saving them becomes important.

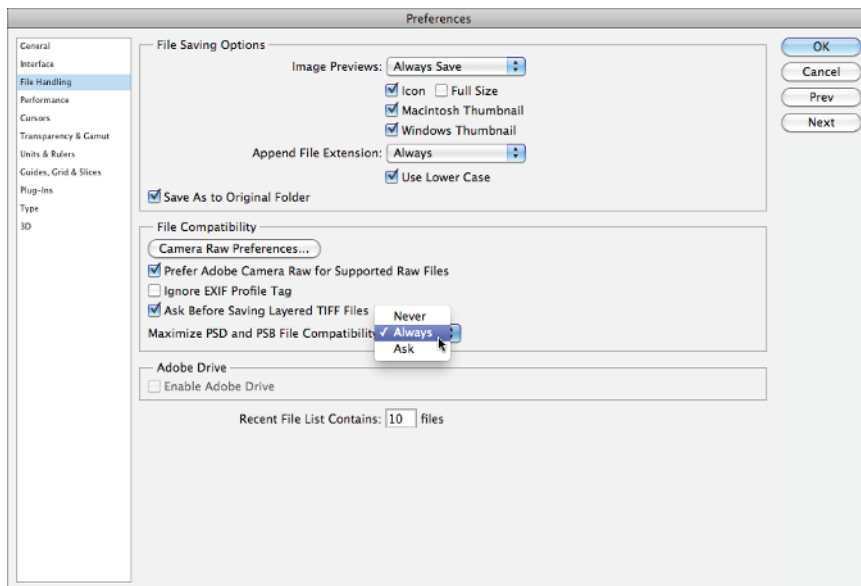
## NOTE

You can also save layers in TIFF files. However, if a TIFF file is opened in anything other than Photoshop, only the flattened image composite — which is automatically saved — is visible.

## TIFF

TIFF stands for Tagged Image File Format. TIFF is a flexible format that's supported by virtually all image-editing and graphics software. Layers can be saved in TIFF, and the format supports a number of color models like CMYK, RGB, and LAB.

Normally, a TIFF file is larger than a PSD file that's saved from the same image. That's because PSD files



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are *compressed* a bit to make them smaller when they're saved. Compression can substantially reduce file size when images contain lots of the same tones, such as solid backgrounds. Images with lots of details and colors won't compress as much.

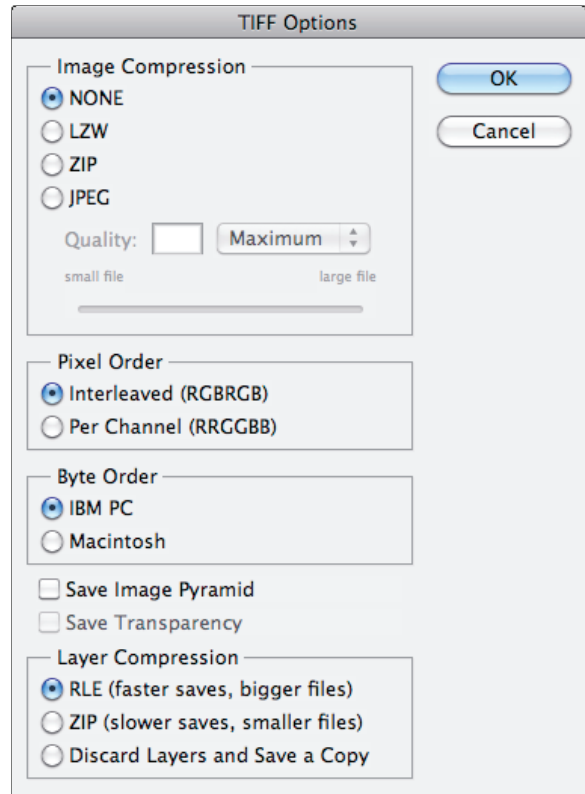
Many file formats support file compression. With PSD, it's a transparent part of the process that happens automatically when a PSD file is saved. With a TIFF file, compression is an option. It must be selected in the TIFF Options dialog box when the file is first saved, as shown in Figure 1-3. Photoshop offers three types of TIFF file compression: LZW, ZIP, and JPEG. The main difference among these three compression methods is that LZW and ZIP are lossless compression methods and JPEG is a lossy method of compression.

When an image is compressed, the data is generally handled in one of two ways:

- > **Lossless compression:** All information is retained during the compression. This means that an image can be resaved and recompressed without compromising image quality.
- > **Lossy compression:** During compression, data is permanently removed. Higher levels of compression result in greater data loss. Every time a file is resaved with lossy compression, more data is lost. This cumulative data loss can greatly affect the quality of an image.

When compressing a TIFF file, stick with lossless compression by selecting LZW or ZIP. They're fairly equal in performance, and Photoshop opens either of them. However, be aware that ZIP is not supported in older software.

Another option with TIFF files in Photoshop is the ability to save layers. This seems pretty cool, except that few image-editing applications can open a layered TIFF file. I don't use layered TIFF files often. If I'm saving a layered file and planning to use Photoshop to edit it,



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then I save it into Photoshop's native file format: PSD. If you're worried about hard drive space, go ahead and save your files in the compressed TIFF format.

## NOTE

A layered TIFF file contains individual layers and a composite of the flattened file. If the file is opened in software that can't see the individual layers, the composite data is all that can be seen.

Because I don't use layered TIFF files, I have Photoshop warn me if I forget to flatten a file before saving it as a TIFF. To do this, I select the Ask Before

Saving Layered TIFF Files option in the Photoshop File Handling preferences, as shown in Figure 1-2. When this box is checked, a warning pops up to remind you that you're about to save a layered TIFF file, as shown in Figure 1-4.



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## JPEG

JPEG (sometimes abbreviated as JPEG) files are always compressed because JPEG was designed to be a space-saving file format. JPEG is one of the most widely used file formats for digital imaging. Virtually any software that can open an image file can open a JPEG. What's more, nearly all the photographs you see on the Internet are JPEG files — at least the ones that look good. JPEGs can be compressed to very small sizes, which is perfect for online delivery or e-mail.

### NOTE

JPEG is an acronym for Joint Photographic Experts Group, a committee that created the format in 1992. The committee's goal was to establish a portable standard for compressing photographic files that would be universal.

Like RAW, JPEG can be used as a capture format. In fact RAW and JPEG are the two primary capture formats. Because many cameras and photographers don't shoot RAW files, JPEG is by far the most widespread capture format. This came about because of JPEG's ability to be compressed. In the early days of digital cameras, memory cards were small and expensive, so the files had to be small so that more would fit onto the card. With the large capacity of memory cards, you can save thousands of JPEG photos on a single card.

Though it's useful, JPEG compression is a double-edged sword. Very small files can be created with high compression, but JPEG compression is lossy, so image quality can be affected. Additionally, whenever a file is resaved, more data is lost. The amount of loss depends on the level of compression.

You select the amount of JPEG compression in Photoshop when a JPEG file is saved. Figure 1-5 shows the JPEG Options dialog box.

In this case, an image that is 24.8MB as an uncompressed TIFF file becomes a 4MB JPEG with a compression quality of 12. If the Quality value, which controls the amount of compression, were lowered to 10 instead of 12, the file size is reduced 1.4MB without adversely affecting the image quality. The key is to try to compress a JPEG file only once when possible by not resaving (and further compressing) the file.

### NOTE

Some photo labs are beginning to require that all JPEGs submitted be saved at a level of 10 instead of 12. This saves space on their servers, which, as you can see from the previous example, can add up quickly.

As you can see, the higher the Quality number in the JPEG Options dialog box, the lower the amount of compression will be. (Lower amounts of compression equal higher quality files.) When saving at a quality of 12, you can make a few multiple resaves to JPEG files without noticeable image degradation (it's happening, you just can't see it yet). If you think you'll be reopening a JPEG and resaving it, choose the highest quality when saving.

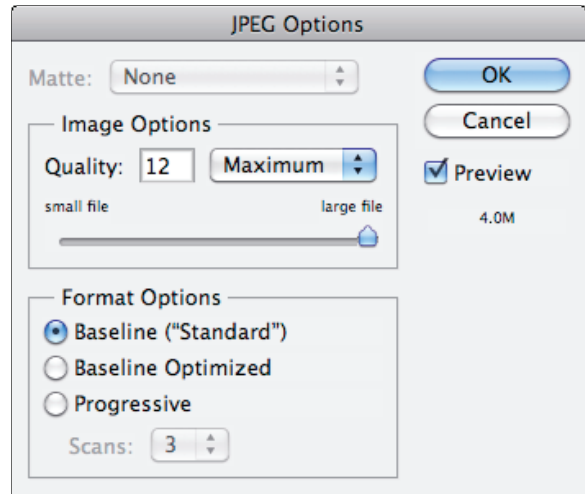
With that in mind, JPEG files can be quite useful. As I mentioned, they're perfect for the Web and e-mail. PSDs and TIFFs are mostly useless for those two purposes because of their relative sizes. Also, most photo labs want only JPEG files because they move through the lab's workflow faster. Many labs won't accept TIFFs, and I've never heard of one that will accept PSDs, though I'm sure you could find one. The real trick to working with JPEG is picking the right time in your workflow to save a file as a JPEG, which is usually at the end of the process when you're ready to create a file for output.

## CREATING AN ORGANIZED SYSTEM

Organization has always been important for photographers. Now with digital photography, organization is more complicated for a couple of reasons. For one thing, if you aren't careful, the place where image files are stored isn't quite so intuitive. Sometimes, files end up in cryptic places requiring three software engineers to find them. For another, working with digital images tends to create lots and lots of derivative files from some original files. When so many similar yet different files are created, organization takes on a whole new meaning. If all of these files are stored in the same folder it becomes difficult and time consuming to locate a particular version of the image.

## CONSIDERING THE NONDESTRUCTIVE WORKFLOW

Photoshop, by its very nature, is destructive to the pixels in an image. That's because editing the image



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changes the pixels in it. Sometimes pixels are even removed. If precautionary measures aren't taken, ordinary things, such as tonal and color adjustment, change the pixels permanently and can't be undone at a later date. The idea behind a *nondestructive* workflow is to keep your options open at all times so that it's easy to change individual elements of the editing process. For example, one way to limit the destructiveness of image editing is to avoid cropping and resizing in Photoshop whenever possible. That's because if you make these changes and close the file, they become permanent.

The problem with this is that you need to crop and resize files at some point. You usually do this when you're giving someone else a copy of the file, taking it to a lab to be printed, or uploading it to a Web site. To solve this problem in a nondestructive way, you save two separate files: an editing file (TIFF or PSD) that retains all the flexibility possible, and an output file (JPEG or TIFF) that has been sized, cropped, and prepared for output. Often, you'll prepare multiple output files from the same original image for different uses. These versions begin to add up, creating a level of complexity that was never a problem when shooting film.

## THREE KINDS OF WORKFLOW FILES

When creating a nondestructive workflow it becomes necessary to organize three different kinds of files: original files from the camera, edited master files that contain as much information as possible (usually in layers), and final files for printing or display. Both a master file and any related final files are derivatives of the same original file. Look more closely at these three kinds of workflow files:

- > **Original files.** These are the capture files from your camera that should never be overwritten. Original files need to remain pristine so you can go back to them when necessary — for example, when you learn a new technique.
- > **Master files.** These editing files contain all the flexibility and options that are built in to the file as it's edited in Photoshop. These files are usually saved as PSD files, though they can be saved as layered TIFF files.
- > **Output files.** These final files have been prepared for some final usage, such as for print, Web, or e-mail. They have been cropped and sized to a final size and sharpened for output.

When all these files from the same image are stored in the same place, they become difficult to manage. They all look similar so you spend time sorting through them. To minimize confusion, these three file types need to be organized in two ways: They have to be in special folders, and they need to have unique names based on the original file's name.

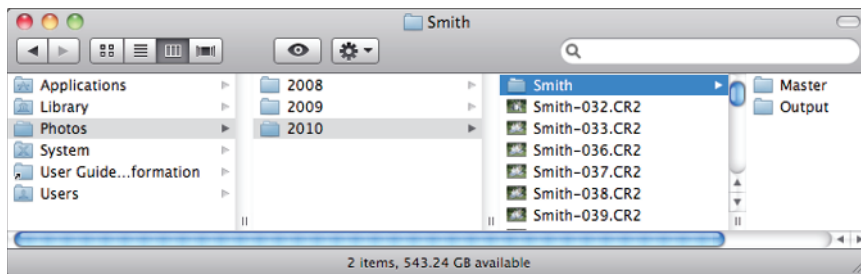
## CREATING A VIRTUAL FILING CABINET

Think of your hard drive as a big filing cabinet. It's divided into separate drawers that are used to organize documents. Folders are stored in these drawers, often with other (sub) folders stored inside of them. This system insures that everything is in its place and can be found when needed.

Figure 1-6 shows a typical hard drive filing strategy with the following file path: Photos⇨2010⇨Smith. The folder named Photos (in the first column) is my filing cabinet. It has three drawers (folders) named 2008, 2009, and 2010. Each of those drawers has a bunch of folders in it. The third column shows the Smith folder and the photos in it. The last column shows two subfolders that are inside of the Smith folder.

The previous example uses three levels of organization:

- > **One main folder (Photos) contains all images in subfolders.** This is incredibly useful when it comes to backing up photos because only one folder — with its subfolders — needs to be backed up.
- > **Subfolders are created for each individual year.** This level of organization prevents you from having to sort through folders from previous years unless you want to.
- > **Shoot/job folders are used to store the files from an individual photo shoot.** This folder contains the original images and subfolders containing different kinds of derivative files.





Creating a filing system like this is the first step to becoming organized. The next step is to begin using a folder and file naming system that complements the kind of photography you do.

## FOLDER AND FILE NAMING STRATEGIES

When it comes to naming folders — and the files stored inside them — there are two predominant schools of thought. One is to name folders with pertinent dates and the other is to use descriptive names that describe the photos in the folder. Take a look at both of these strategies to determine which is best for you.

### Naming folders with dates

Some photographers prefer to name all shoot/job folders with the date they were shot, or in some cases uploaded. That way every folder is listed in chronological order. The key to using this naming strategy is to use the correct date format so that folders are sorted in the correct order. The preferred method is Year\_Month\_Day.

This way, every file is sorted in the correct order, beginning with the year, then the month, then the day. Some people like to make life easier by adding a descriptive name to the end of the date. For example, if I shoot some scenic photos at the Oregon coast, I name my folder 2008\_08\_21\_Oregon\_Coast.

## NOTE

I use an underscore (`_`), (`Shift+—`) to separate the numbers in the dates. This is better than leaving a space, especially when you plan to upload photos to the Web because most Web servers replace a space with `%20`. Some won't even accept files with a space in the name. You can also use a hyphen (`-`) or you can run the numbers together.

## PRO TIP

Mac users can use a slash (`/`) in a folder name instead of a hyphen. However, Windows users may not be able to see the folder because `/` is an illegal character in some Windows environments. Web servers may also have a problem with the character; therefore, it's best to not use a slash in your naming strategy.

One of the main drawbacks to using this Year\_Month\_Day system is that it tends to spread out similar images too much. In its purest form, all photos are placed into dated folders that represent the day they were created.

If I take a trip to Europe for two weeks and then download all my photos using the date naming system, I end up with a folder for every day. If I took pictures every day, then my vacation photos would be spread out into 14 folders. I prefer to see them all together. A better organizational system in this case is to create a main folder with a general date — such as the date the files were uploaded — and then add all files to this one folder instead of placing them into individual daily folders.

### Naming folders with descriptive names

Another strategy is to use a descriptive name to identify a shoot. With this strategy, the folder from my European trip is named Europe\_2010. If I took more than one trip to Europe, I would add the month after the year. An advantage to this strategy is that folder names are more descriptive. Another advantage is that all photos from the shoot are automatically located in one main folder.

The main disadvantage with this strategy is that folders are sorted alphabetically, instead of chronologically. If chronology is important to you, then this system may not be the best choice. Another disadvantage is that a single descriptive name doesn't always describe everything in the folder. This happens when you allow lots of images to collect on your camera's media card before uploading them.

One way to solve this is to do multiple uploads from the camera's card — placing groups of images into individual folders with descriptive names. A better way to solve this is to regularly upload your photos so they don't accumulate on the card.

### Choosing your naming strategy

I know photographers who use both the date and descriptive systems to file images. The people who tend to use the date system are photographers who shoot lots of images, such as commercial and stock shooters. They also tend to be photographers who are highly organized because they often have to locate stored files over long periods of time. The photographers who tend to use the descriptive name method are mostly portrait and wedding photographers who are more oriented to locating jobs by the client's name.

Some photographers don't fall squarely into either of these camps. They tend to use a blend of the two naming systems. If the images in the folder can be categorized with a descriptive name — such as Hawaii 2010, or Jones Wedding — then they use a name. When the images don't have a predominant theme, they use a general date for the name and then use keywords to identify the individual images.

No matter which system you choose, make sure that you're consistent in the way you use it.

## NOTE



A *keyword* is a descriptive term that you attach to a photo file to describe something about it. For example, if I go to the coast I might use keywords such as Beach, Seagull, Tide Pool, and Ocean to identify the contents of various photos. Later, if I search for the keyword Seagull, all photos with the Seagull keyword attached to them are quickly found.

### Naming original files

Digital cameras automatically create filenames for every photo you shoot. Sometimes those names, such as the filenames shown in Figure 1-7, are quite cryptic and don't tell you much about the photos they represent. That's why I always like to change these names to descriptive names — often the same name I use for the main folder.

For example the Smith job's folder is named Smith, and the individual files are named Smith-001.CR2, Smith-002.CR2, and so on. Renaming is often done as the original files are transferred from the camera's media card to the computer, but it can also be done after the files are in the system using Bridge, as you see later in this chapter.

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	_MG_0886.CR2	8.1 MB	Canon Camera Raw file
	_MG_0885.CR2	8.1 MB	Canon Camera Raw file
	_MG_0884.CR2	8.1 MB	Canon Camera Raw file
	_MG_0883.CR2	7.9 MB	Canon Camera Raw file
	_MG_0882.CR2	8 MB	Canon Camera Raw file
	_MG_0881.CR2	8.1 MB	Canon Camera Raw file
	_MG_0880.CR2	8 MB	Canon Camera Raw file
	_MG_0879.CR2	7.6 MB	Canon Camera Raw file
	_MG_0878.CR2	7.4 MB	Canon Camera Raw file
	_MG_0877.CR2	7.1 MB	Canon Camera Raw file
	_MG_0876.CR2	7.3 MB	Canon Camera Raw file
	_MG_0875.CR2	7.4 MB	Canon Camera Raw file
	_MG_0874.CR2	7.6 MB	Canon Camera Raw file

When I rename files, I generally use a naming strategy like Jane\_Doe-123. A name like this makes more sense on a couple of levels. First, if I ever need to find Jane's photos using the photos' names, I can do a system search with my computer's operating system for Jane\_Doe. Without a descriptive name, this becomes impossible.

The second reason a descriptive filename makes sense is that eventually derivative files for editing and output will be created from some of the originals. It's easier to keep those files organized when you begin with a meaningful name.

For example, suppose the original file is named MG\_6337.cr2 because that's what the camera automatically named it, the master file is named Sarah\_Jones123.psd, and the final file for 8 × 10 printing is named Girl\_in\_Boat.JPEG.

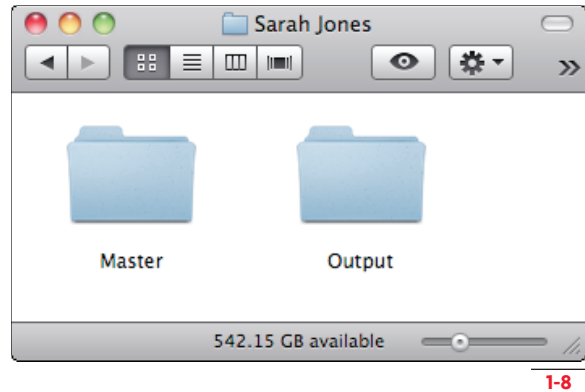
This causes problems in two ways. First, if the files are all placed into in the same folder and they're being sorted alphabetically, they're scattered all over the place among the other files. Second, if you learn some new tricks next year and decide to redo the Girl\_in\_Boat.JPEG image, you may have trouble remembering from which original file it's derived.

If I rename the original file as soon as it's copied from the media card to the computer, any new derivative file can use that name as a base.

In the previous example, the original file becomes Sarah\_Jones123.cr2, the master file becomes Sarah\_Jones123\_edited.psd, and the final file becomes Sarah\_Jones123\_8x10.JPEG. This way, I know exactly what kind of file I'm looking at just by looking at the name. In the case of Sarah\_Jones123\_8x10.JPEG I even know that it's been prepared for an 8 × 10 print.

## FILING PHOTOS IN YOUR VIRTUAL FILING CABINET

After you establish a naming methodology, you must address the second level of file organization: filing different kinds of workflow files into the appropriate folders. Figure 1-8 shows how I organize my file folders.



When I begin a new project, I create a folder for it. In this case, the parent folder is titled Sarah Jones. This folder contains all of the original photos as well as two subfolders named Master and Output.

## PRO TIP

Sometimes it's hard to find the Master and Output folders in a job folder because they get buried with all of the original files. I solve this by placing an underscore in front of the folder names, such as `_Master`. Doing this places these files at the top of the sorting order when files and folders are sorted alphanumerically by your system.

My goal with this organizational system is to make it so intuitive that I know where everything is without looking. Even though I never do it, I want to be able to call my assistant back at my office and ask her to send a particular file to me if I need it. I can do that because I know exactly where the file should be, and so does she.

Your system doesn't necessarily have to look like mine. Create something that makes sense to you because you're the one who needs to understand it. The thing that's most important here is to get a system in place and begin using it now.

## MANAGING YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEM WITH ADOBE BRIDGE CS5

Early versions of Photoshop had no file browser. If users wanted the ability to visually browse through files to find a particular image, they had to purchase a separate file browser. When Adobe released Photoshop 7, it finally included a very useful file browser that came as part of Photoshop. When Photoshop CS2 was released, the file browser was retooled and separated from Photoshop.

This new file browser was named Adobe Bridge, a stand-alone software that could be used even if Photoshop wasn't running.

### NOTE

Bridge is named Bridge because it's more than a Photoshop file browser. It's a central file browser for a number of Adobe titles, such as InDesign and Illustrator. It acts as a bridge between these applications.

Compared to most file browser programs, Bridge is like a browser on steroids. With Bridge, you can view and organize images in a very flexible and intuitive environment. You can rate images and sort them with colored labels and stars, and you can attach a variety of metadata so they can be quickly located later. Because Bridge is such a comprehensive program, it would be easy to dedicate a couple of chapters to it.

My goal here is to introduce you to it and point out some of the highlights so that you can begin using it to manage your files now. If you're already working with Bridge and feel comfortable using it, you still might want to review this section to insure that you're getting the most from this useful piece of software.

### NOTE

Bridge comes with Photoshop CS5. When you install Photoshop, Bridge also is installed. You can launch it independently of Photoshop by clicking its icon in your Applications folder (Mac) or from the All Programs button in the Start menu (Windows).

### GETTING A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF BRIDGE

I talk to lots of professional photographers, and I'm continually amazed at how many use Photoshop on a regular basis but don't use Bridge. In fact, many of these people don't even know how to launch it from Photoshop. It isn't because they don't like Bridge; they just don't understand it. After they learn to use Bridge, they seldom go back to their old system.

To open Bridge from Photoshop, choose File→Browse in Bridge. You also can launch Bridge by clicking the Launch Bridge button with a Br icon at the top left of the Photoshop CS5 workspace. When Bridge is already running, this button provides a quick way to jump to it from Photoshop.

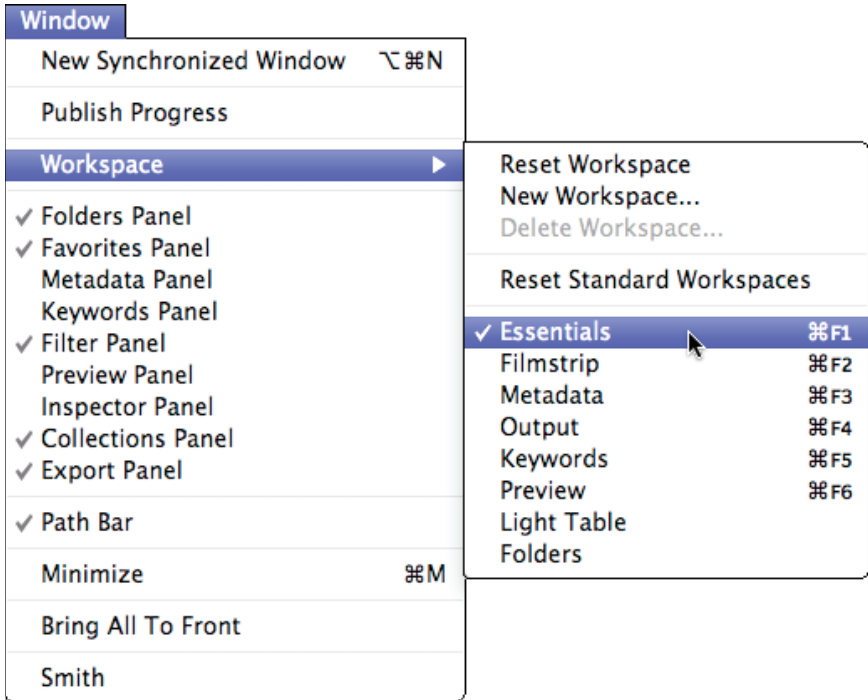
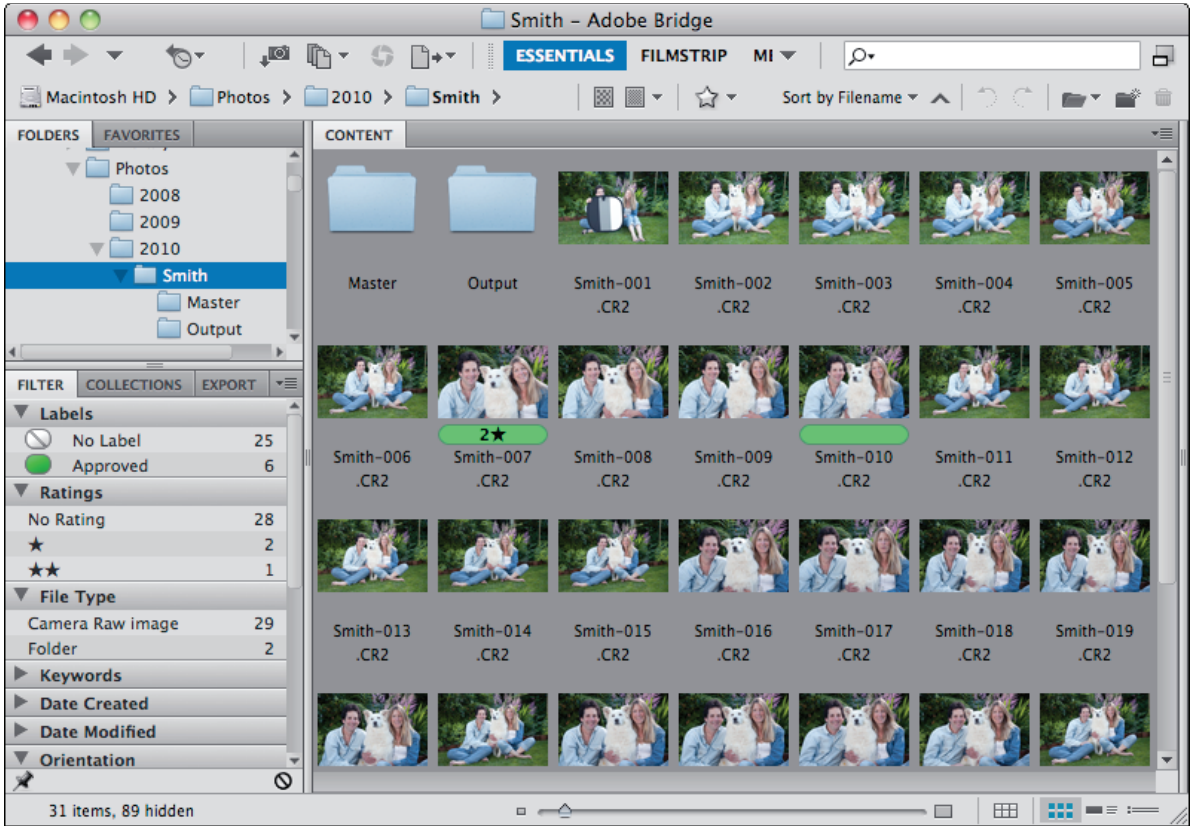
When Bridge opens your screen will look something like Figure 1-9.

If your screen looks different than the one shown in Figure 1-9, it's because your *workspace* is different. You can use different layouts of the Bridge workspace for different tasks, which is a great asset. This is covered in a moment. First, set Bridge back to its default view by choosing Window→Workspace→Essentials (⌘/Ctrl+F1), as shown in Figure 1-10.

The Bridge CS5 Default workspace consists of a series of panels. Here's what some of them are used for:

- > **Folders panel.** This displays the folder tree of the folders on the hard drive. Notice the folder structure in Figure 1-9. The folder currently being viewed is the main job folder.





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- > **Favorites panel:** This panel allows you to have easy access to some of the areas you use most. It comes with a few common locations, such as Desktop, loaded into it. Click and drag a folder from the Content area to the Favorites panel to add it to the list.
- > **Filter panel:** Whenever the content of a folder is displayed in the Content area, the Filter panel looks at the content and dynamically displays all the different ways that the particular folder can be filtered. If you are viewing a new folder where few changes have been made in Bridge, then the options are limited.

In Figure 1-9, you can see that the Filter panel opened headings for Labels (colored labels), Ratings (rating stars), and File Type. Sorting for one of these criteria is easy. You just click it in the Filter panel. For example, if I want to see only the six files that have a green label, I click on the green (Approved) label under the labels heading. You can even sort for more than one criterion by selecting multiple criteria. To turn filtering off, deselect the filter criteria by clicking them.

The other, collapsed headings allow you to sort for other criteria. For example, to see only the vertical images, open the Orientation heading by clicking on the sideways-pointing triangle and choose Portrait.

## NOTE

The Filter panel uses metadata that's attached to each file as sorting criteria. Metadata, such as ISO Speed Rating and Exposure Time, are attached to the file when it's created in the camera. The user can attach Metadata as well, such as colored labels and stars, in Bridge after the file is created.

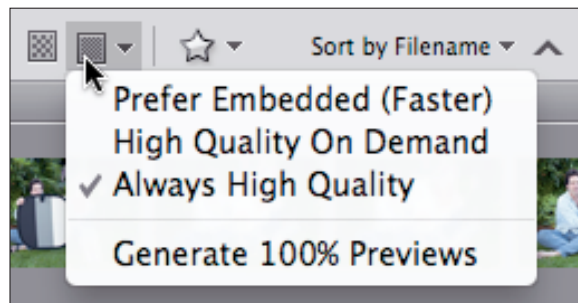
- > **Content panel:** This is the main viewing window. Thumbnails of the selected folder in the Folders panel are displayed here. Use the thumbnail size slider at the bottom right of the workspace to change the size of these thumbnails. Double-click on a file to open it in Photoshop.

Another important part of the Bridge user interface is the Application bar at the top of the interface. This bar provides a number of useful buttons that give you quick access to features, such as access to recent folders and the Bridge photo downloader.

Just below this bar is the Path bar, which displays the path to the currently displayed folder for easy reference, as well as other buttons that are used to sort, rotate, and filter photos in the Content panel.

An important button on the Path bar is the Thumbnail Quality button that's just to the left of the star in Figure 1-9. Clicking this button opens a drop-down list, as shown in Figure 1-11, that controls the quality of the thumbnail images as they're rendered in the Content panel.

Shortly after Photoshop CS5 was released, a longtime client called to tell me that all of her thumbnails in Bridge looked horrible. The cause was due to Prefer Embedded (Faster) being selected. This helps to render the thumbnails quickly, but quality can suffer. When she switched the menu to Always High Quality, the thumbnails were rerendered and the low quality issue disappeared.



1-11

## CREATING CUSTOM WORKSPACES

As I mentioned earlier, predefined workspaces are used to set up the working environment to suit the way you like to work. One of my favorites is the Light Table workspace (Window⇨Workspace⇨Light Table). When you activate it, all side panels are instantly hidden and the Content area is maximized, allowing you to focus on only the thumbnails.

### PRO TIP

Another way to quickly hide the side panels is to press the Tab key. Press Tab again to reveal the panels. This shortcut can also be used in Photoshop to hide all panels.

What makes these workspaces even cooler is that you can create your own custom workspaces. Though Bridge comes with a Preview workspace for viewing a large preview of the selected file(s), I like to create my own custom workspace that gives me large preview workspace that suits my needs. I show you how to do that in just a moment. First, I want to show you how to modify the default layout so you can save your own custom workspace:

1. I don't use the Export panel, which can be used to upload photos to online storage sites such as Photoshop.com or Flickr.com, so I just turn it off. To turn yours off, go to the Window menu and click Export Panel to uncheck it. If you don't want to see other panels, now is the time to uncheck them.
2. I also like to change the accent color in the Bridge preferences. Here's how: For Windows, choose Edit⇨Preferences; for Mac choose Adobe Bridge CS5⇨Preferences.

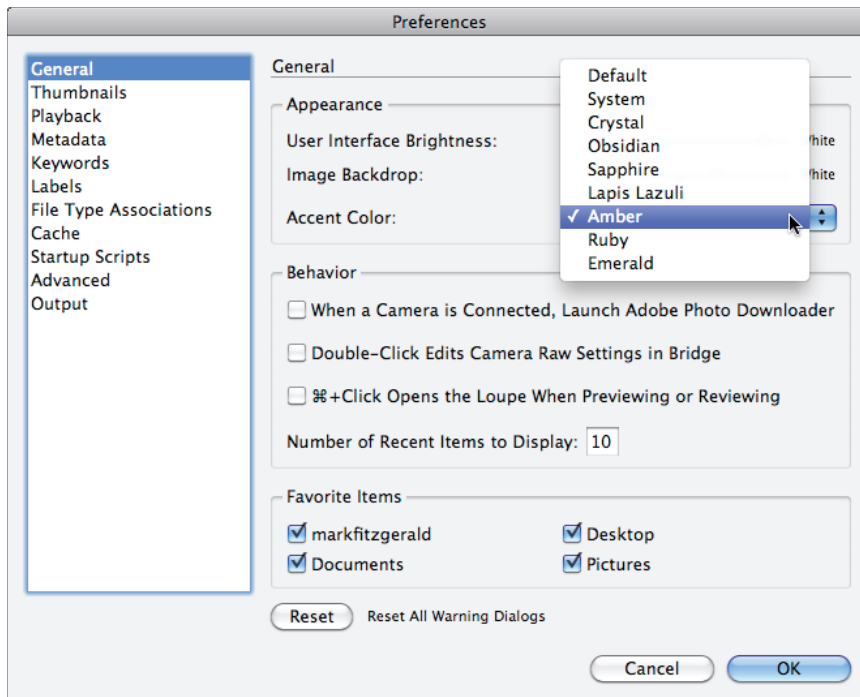
3. Make sure that the General preferences are highlighted in the menu on the left. Click on the Accent Color to open it and choose a different color, as shown in Figure 1-12. I like to use Amber because it's easy to see. If you want to remove some of the default items from the Favorites panel, deselect them from the Favorite Items area at the bottom of the dialog box.
4. Click OK.

### NOTE

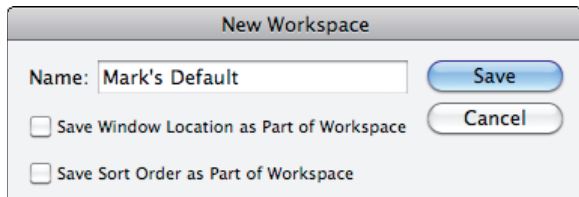
Due to space limitations, I can't go into the rest of Bridge's preferences. However, I want to point out one setting in the Preferences⇨Thumbnails menu. Under the Details heading in this preference set, you can select the kind of information that's displayed below each image thumbnail by selecting it from the list. Click the pop-up beside Show to choose the exact information you want to see.

5. Click and drag the vertical and horizontal bars that separate panels to make any adjustments to panel positions until you have a workspace that you like and can use every day. When you're ready to save it, choose Window⇨Workspace⇨New Workspace and name the workspace, as shown in Figure 1-13.

If you select Save Window Location as Part of Workspace, the Bridge window always opens in the same location. Choosing Save Sort Order as Part of Workspace uses the current file sorting order every time you use the workspace. I recommend you don't select this one because it can be annoying to have a special sort order change when you switch workspaces.



1-12



1-13

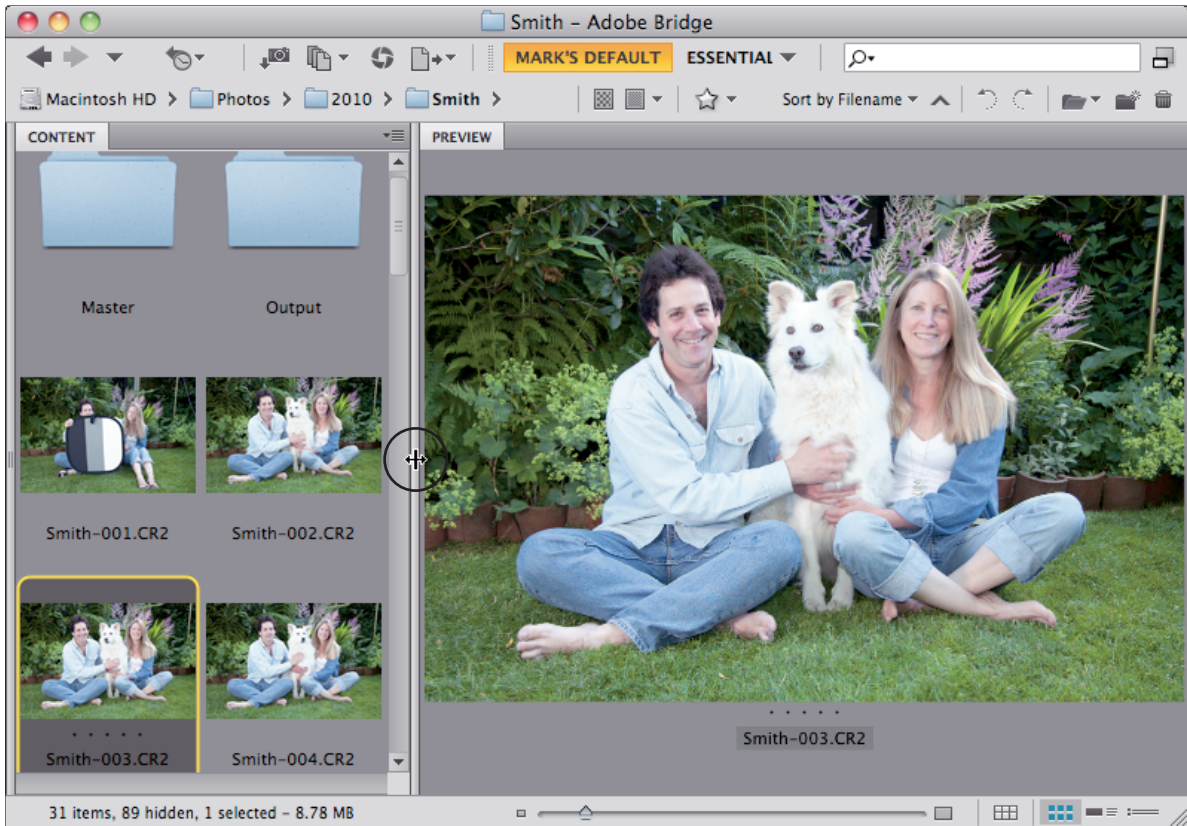
Okay, now that you have a default workspace saved, here's how you can create another one that's designed for focusing on a large preview of the selected file(s).

1. Go to the Window menu and deselect all the panels except Preview. You'll have to uncheck them one at a time. This removes them from the interface. When you finish, you should see only two panels: Content (which can't be removed) and Preview.

2. Move your cursor over the line that divides the Preview panel and the Content area. When you see the cursor change to a double-sided arrow, shown circled in Figure 1-14, click and drag to the left until a single column of thumbnails is visible on the left.
3. The only thing left to do is to save the workspace. Choose Window → Workspace → New Workspace. I named mine Large Previews.

Now you can instantly jump back and forth between these two workspaces by choosing them from the Workspace menu. When I work in Bridge, I use these two custom workspaces, along with the Light Table workspace, exclusively.





1-14

## PRO TIP

A faster way to change workspaces is to use the Workspace Switcher menu on the Application bar. To access this menu, click the downward-pointing arrow to the right of the workspaces listed on the Application bar. You can see it in Figure 1-14 just to the right of the Essential button.

Now that you have the Bridge workspace laid out the way you like it, it's time to put it to work.

## USING BRIDGE TO BATCH RENAME PHOTOS

I mentioned earlier that naming should happen to an original file early on so that any derivative images use the original name as the root of their own name. For this to be truly effective, you must apply meaningful names to the original images as early as possible.

To rename a file in Bridge, simply click its name below the thumbnail in the Content panel. Sometimes, it takes a moment for the name to highlight. Be patient. If you're in a hurry and click twice too quickly, Bridge interprets it as a double-click and opens the file in Photoshop.

## PRO TIP

If a file begins to open when you don't want it to, try immediately pressing the Esc key on your keyboard. If you get to it soon enough, the file opening is aborted.

Being able to rename a file is useful, but for this to really work you need to be able to rename all files at once. This is called *batch renaming*. Batch renaming is extremely useful for dealing with digital camera files

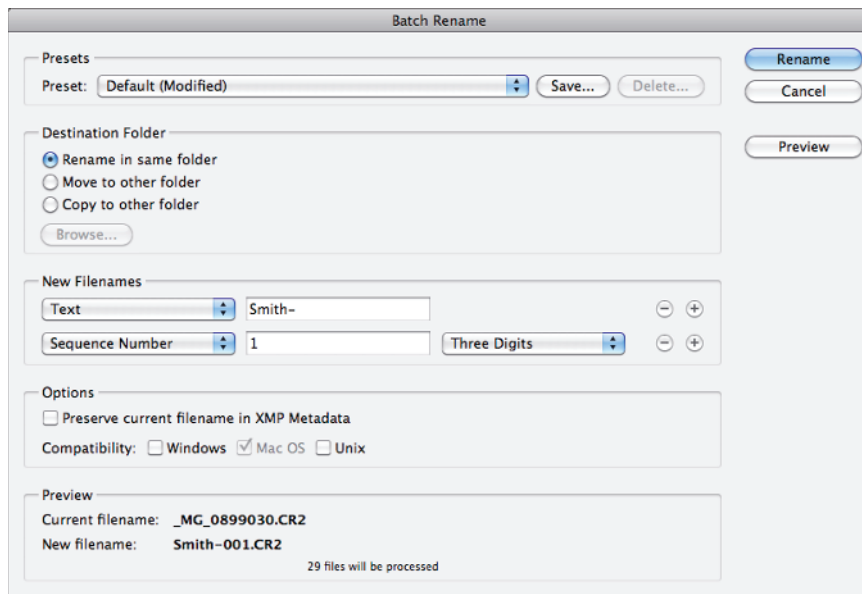
because there are usually quite a few of them. Fortunately, batch renaming is quite simple and straightforward in Bridge.

Here's how it works:

1. Select the files that need to be renamed. If renaming happens early enough in the process, you usually rename all files. If that's the case, select all files by choosing Edit⇨Select All (Ctrl/⌘+A).
2. Choose Tools⇨Batch Rename (Shift+⌘/Ctrl+R) to open the Batch Rename dialog box, as shown in Figure 1-15. The look of this dialog box varies depending on whether the Batch Rename function has been used before. These settings are *sticky*, meaning they stay where you last left them.
3. The first thing to check is that the Rename in same folder option is selected in the Destination Folder section; otherwise, the photos could be copied to another folder, or even moved.

One of my clients inadvertently selected the Move to other folder option when renaming a wedding she photographed. When she did, all the files disappeared from her folder and she thought they had been deleted. If this happens to you, do a search for the new name to find the folder to which your images were moved.

4. Go to the first menu box in the New Filenames section. If it says anything other than Text, click on it and choose Text from the drop-down list. Then type the new filename as you want it to appear. In my case, in Figure 1-15 I typed Smith-. The reason I added a hyphen after the name is to add a bit of separation between the name and the sequence number that is added in the next step. This is especially useful if you use a date naming strategy.



1-15

- Now you need to add a sequence number to the filename so that all files are named sequentially. If no other boxes are below the Text boxes, click the plus button (+) to the right to add an additional naming element. Then use the drop-down list for that element to select Sequence Number. Use the pop-up on the right box to set the number of digits to what you want. I selected Three Digits. In the middle box, type the starting number of your sequence.
- Click Rename to complete the process and rename your files.

## PRO TIP

At the bottom left of the Batch Rename dialog box is a section called Preview. It allows you to preview what the new filename will look like before completing the process. Checking this can be very useful, especially if you're using dates for filenames and you forget to add a hyphen to separate the filename and the sequence number.

## WORKING WITH LABELS AND RATING STARS

After the files are renamed, it's time to sort through them and identify the winners and losers. The best way to do that is to use colored labels and/or rating stars. When these are in place, you can quickly find images that have them applied by using the Filter panel. However, before you begin adding labels there's an interesting preference you should look at.

For some reason, the engineers at Adobe decided a couple of versions ago to rename the colored labels to names other than the name of the color. For example, green is named Approved and red is named Select. This causes confusion in two ways. First, when you go to the Label menu, it's difficult to know which label is a specific color. The other, and more serious, problem concerns people who use Lightroom. When colored labels are added in Lightroom and then viewed in Bridge, they all appear white instead of colored.

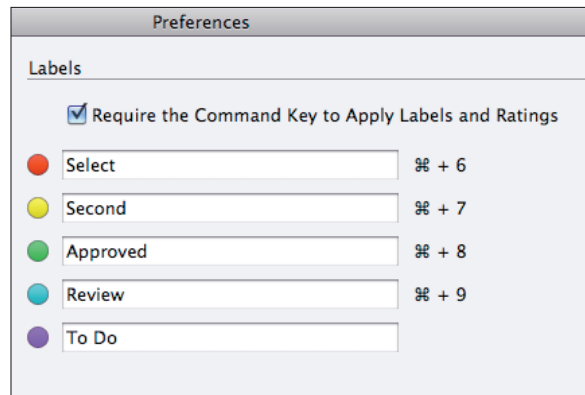
To switch your label names to the old defaults, follow these steps:

- Open the Bridge preferences and choose labels from the menu on the left. This opens the Labels Preferences dialog box shown in Figure 1-16.
- Click in each text box and rename the label to its color using an initial cap. For example, Select becomes Red. Then click OK to make the change. Now your label names make more sense.

## PRO TIP

Deselect the Require the Command Key to Apply Labels and Ratings option to shorten the keyboard shortcuts for colored labels and rating stars to a single numerical key-stroke.

Colored labels can be added to an individual image or to a group of selected images by choosing the Label menu and selecting the color you want. For example, if I want to add a green label to a photo, I choose Label⇨Green. This adds a green label beneath the selected thumbnail(s). If you don't like digging through menus, learn the shortcut keys for the labels you use most often and use them instead. These shortcuts are listed next to the labels and stars in the Label menu. Purple is the only one that doesn't have a shortcut because the engineers ran out of numbers. To remove a label, choose it again from the menu or use its shortcut key.



Rating stars work pretty much the same way. Go to the Labels menu and select the number of stars that you want to place on the thumbnail, or use the shortcut key. To remove a rating star, choose Label⇨No Rating.

Another way to quickly add stars to a file is to use the shortcut that's built in to the thumbnail. Just below the image on each selected thumbnail are five little dots that represent the five rating stars. Just click the dot number that represents the number of stars that you want; in other words, click the second dot from the left to add two stars. To remove stars, click the Cancel icon that appears just to the left of the first star when you move your cursor there.

## NOTE

If the thumbnails are scaled too small, the dots (and labels for that matter) may not be visible. Use the Thumbnail size slider at the bottom right of the Bridge interface to increase their size until you can see the labels.

You can use labels and stars to identify and sort image files in a variety of ways. I use a fairly simple system: Green labels mark images I like, and red labels mark images I want to delete. I do this very quickly, usually in the large preview workspace so I get a good look at each image.

1. When I see an image I like, I add a green label to it. When I see one I want to delete, I add a red label to it.
2. After all images are labeled, I go to the Filter panel and click the Red label to display only the red labels.
3. I select all the red-labeled images (⌘/Ctrl+A), and press Delete. This opens the dialog box shown in Figure 1-17. It gives me two options for removing the files. Clicking Reject hides the file without deleting it, which can lead to endless confusion.

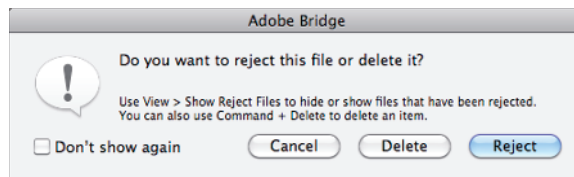
Clicking Delete sends the files to the Trash on a Mac or the Recycling Bin on a PC. Notice in Figure 1-16 that you can press ⌘/Ctrl+Delete to delete an item, eliminating the need to go through this dialog box.

4. Then I click the red label in the Filter panel to turn the filter off so I can see all the remaining images.
5. Now I can click the green label in the Filter panel so I can focus on my favorites. As I go through these, I look for the best of my favorites and use stars to make them stand out even more. One star = mild interest; two stars = more interest; three stars = very interested.
6. After that's finished, I go to the Filter panel and select three stars under Ratings. Now the only images I'm viewing are the most important images in the folder.

## PRO TIP

Stars also are a great way to let clients rate their images after you've done a rough sort with colored labels. Show them the green ones, and let them use stars to indicate their favorites.

You don't have to use colored labels and rating stars exactly the same way I do here. Just develop a system with them that means something to you. After you have that system, try to use it all the time. When you see a particular colored label or a certain number of stars on an image, you'll instantly know how important it is.



## INTRODUCING MINI BRIDGE

As I stated earlier, Bridge is an incredibly powerful application. What you've seen in this chapter is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Bridge's feature set. Sometimes, though, you don't need all of that power — you simply need to quickly find and open a file. Because Adobe realized this, it introduced a slimmed-down version of Bridge, named Mini Bridge, with the release of Photoshop CS5.

Mini Bridge is not a separate application like the full version of Bridge. It's a panel that can be opened within Photoshop, even when Bridge isn't running. This allows a great deal of flexibility because the panel can be left open for use without consuming the system resources required by a fully functioning program like Bridge.

To open Mini Bridge in Photoshop, choose File⇒Browse in Mini Bridge. You can also open it by clicking the Launch Mini Bridge button, which is just to the right of the Launch Bridge button on Photoshop's Application bar.

Figure 1-18 shows the Mini Bridge panel. This elegant design incorporates all of the most important features of Bridge in a very small space.

Using Mini Bridge is fairly straightforward. When you click on an option in the Navigation pod, its content is displayed in the pod to the right.

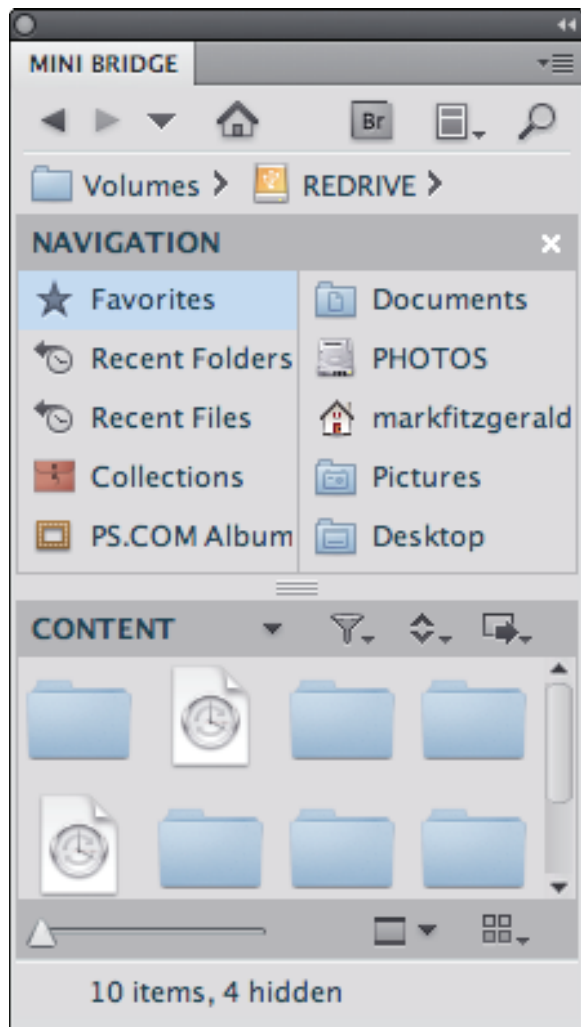
In Figure 1-18, I clicked Favorites to display the list of my favorites on the right. When I click one of these headings, such as Pictures, the Content pod below is populated with its contents. Just like the full version of Bridge, double-clicking on a folder in the Content pod reveals the contents of that folder in the Content pod. Double-clicking on a file opens it into Photoshop. If you decide that you need to open the full version of Bridge, click the Go to Adobe Bridge button on the top row. It's the button with a Br icon on it.

Even if you're a longtime user of Bridge, I guarantee you'll find that the new Mini Bridge improves your workflow because it gives you quick access to your files without ever leaving Photoshop.

## BACKING UP AND ARCHIVING

Why organize all your photos if you don't take the time to back them up? Digital photography offers all kinds of creative opportunities that have changed the way photographers work with images. Unlike film, though, digital files can disappear in an instant when a hard drive crashes.

If proper archiving measures aren't used, a hard drive crash can be catastrophic. The following sections explore some archiving options and strategies.



1-18



## HARD DRIVES

One of the easiest ways to create a backup is with a separate hard drive that backs up all image files. In its more sophisticated form, this is often an array of multiple hard drives that are set up to act as one. This kind of array is called a *RAID* (Redundant Array of Independent Disks). Several different schemes are used to protect file integrity on a RAID. Here are the two main methods:

- > **Mirroring:** (Sometimes referred to as RAID1)  
Identical data is written to more than one disk. If a disk in this array crashes, identical data is recovered from the mirrored disk.
- > **Striping:** (Sometimes referred to as RAID0)  
Information is spread out across multiple disks. This greatly enhances performance because several disks are doing the job of one disk when reading and writing. However, unless some form of redundancy is built into the system, there is no data protection as in mirroring. Setting up some form of redundancy allows for striped data to be recovered after a crash. One method of doing this is to have software that can reconstruct missing data from a crashed hard drive by analyzing data that wasn't lost on the other hard drives.

All the workings inside a RAID, mirroring and striping, happen in the background. The best part is that it happens automatically. The RAID just looks like a big hard drive to the computer's operating system. After a RAID is set up, it does its job whether you think about it or not. With the low cost of hard drives today, a RAID is a great option if you're dealing with lots of files.

### PRO TIP

I know many photographers who are using a RAID system called Drobo from a company named Data Robotics, Inc. ([www.drobo.com](http://www.drobo.com)). Drobos come in a few different configurations as to the number of hard drives that are used. These systems are easy to set up and configure. Once that's done, your data is backed up automatically.

A less sophisticated, yet equally effective hard drive solution is to have a secondary hard drive that's used for storing backup copies. These backups can be created automatically with specially designed software, or they can be created manually by dragging and dropping files. Of these two schemes, the automatic solution is by far the best because you don't need to remember to do it. With backup software like ChronoSync by Econ Technologies (for Mac) and Microsoft Sync Toy (for Windows), multiple auto-backup scenarios are easy to set up so that you never have to think about them again. Mac users with the Leopard operating system can also use Time Machine to back up their system, though it isn't as flexible as a program like ChronoSync.

Hard drive storage is a great solution for storing backup files, but this also can lead to a false sense of security. A few years ago, shortly after relocating my office, I had three hard drives crash within months of each other. They were all from different manufactures, and they weren't in a RAID. One of those drives was my main drive that had lots of data files on it. One of the other drives was a backup drive of that same data. Unfortunately, I hadn't taken the time to restore all the backed-up data, so when the second drive crashed everything was gone.

### PRO TIP

I solved my crashing hard drive problem by purchasing an uninterruptable power supply (UPS). A UPS is little more than a big battery that you plug your computer into. If the power goes out unexpectedly, the UPS kicks in, giving you time to close important files and shut down your computer. Most UPS units also do something else: they clean up the incoming power so it's more stable. That's what solved my crashing problem.

More extreme nightmare scenarios that can make your life miserable are fire and theft. Either of these events can wipe out years of work. You have to think about all these possibilities when you consider the storage of

image files. I know several photographers who locate a backup drive or RAID in a hidden portion of their home or office in case of theft. With some of the wireless hard drive solutions available today, this is an even more viable option.

In the case of fire, the best protection is to have a backup of important data that's stored off-site. To do this, add a second hard drive to your backup regimen and store it in a fireproof safe or at a friend's house. Then every week or so swap this drive with your main backup drive so that the drive with the most recent data is placed in a safe place.

## PRO TIP

Many photographers are beginning to use online storage options for backing up image files. This can be a great solution, too. But if you use online storage, make sure it's not your only backup. You want to make sure your data is still there when you need it. As you may recall, a few years ago when the economy took a dive many Internet companies disappeared overnight without any warning.

## CD/DVD

Another system for backing up and archiving images is using CDs and DVDs. CDs and DVDs are cheap, and almost any computer can read them. If handled properly, they faithfully preserve data for many years.

CDs and DVDs are not as easy and seamless as using a hard drive, and they don't offer quick access to data. In my mind, they're best used as an adjunct to a hard drive backup — more of an archive that can be pulled out anytime a file needs to be resurrected. In a well-designed workflow, they should be used at two different times:

- > **As soon as you finish transferring, sorting, and renaming a new job or project burn a CD (or DVD if necessary) of all original files and store it in a safe place.** In the case of a professional photographer, that would be in the job folder or client's folder.

- > **After all work for the job or project is done, burn a DVD(s) of all related folders — originals, masters, and finals folders.** File this DVD with the first CD/DVD backup you created. If the job or project is important, burn a second copy and store it off-site. Now everything is completely covered. You will probably never need these discs, but it's comforting to know that they are there in case you do. If the job or project is a big one that takes lots of time, then intermediate DVD backups are a good idea. You can use rerecordable media for this.

## NOTE

A debate is currently raging concerning the longevity of CDs and DVDs. Some people say that they can't be trusted, while others say they'll last 100 years. In my own experience, I've seen more hard drives fail than CDs or DVDs. However, some photographers recopy their CD/DVD archives every few years to ensure longevity.

When working with optical discs, you need to observe some basic ground rules regarding handling. They scratch easily when dragged across rough surfaces, so they should be stored in some sort of acid-free sleeve at all times. It's important to use acid-free sleeves because acids in other types of plastic or paper sleeves can deteriorate the plastic that the discs are composed of. Also, keep these additional things in mind when working with CDs and DVDs:

- > **Try to avoid writing on the top surface.** These discs are read by a laser beam that shines up from the bottom through the lower layers of plastic. It reflects off the shiny layer on top and bounces back down to read the data. If anything is done to degrade the reflective nature of the surface on the top of the disc, the laser won't be able to read it. Sometimes the acid in a pen's ink can destroy the shiny layer on top.



If you need to write on a disc, try to do it on the inner circle where the plastic is clear. Another option is to purchase printable CDs and DVDs. These are designed to be printed on with an inkjet printer, so they have a more durable surface that you can write on.

- > **Only use labels that are approved for CDs and DVDs.** These use adhesives that are acid-free. You really don't know what kind of adhesive is used on a standard mailing label. Besides the adhesive issue, mailing labels can cause a different problem. A couple of years ago, a client dropped off a CD with files he wanted me to work on. He labeled the CD with three small, rectangular mailing labels.

Each label had a different set of information. I was unable to read this disc on any of my systems because when it was spinning at 10,000 RPM in the disc drive, the labels threw it out of balance.

- > **Store disks in proper, acid-free sleeves or envelopes.** Keep them out of the sun, preferably in the dark. Store them lying flat if possible, rather than upright.

When it comes to backing up, you don't need a sophisticated system, but you do need a system. Working without one is like a trapeze artist working without a net. When things come crashing down, it can be a real showstopper.



**I want to implement an organizational system similar to the one you described in this chapter. However, I already have thousands of files that aren't very well organized. The thought of going back and organizing them now seems overwhelming. How do you suggest I proceed?**

The best thing to do is start organizing all new work now. Any new files, whether they're originals or derivatives, need to be named and filed in organized folders. As you do this, your new system begins to materialize. When you have time, you can go back and roughly organize older work. Begin with files that are the most important to you. Group them into a hierarchal folder system whenever possible. Don't worry about renaming the individual files unless the process seems straightforward to you. Naturally, the level you go into with older files will depend on the type of photography you do. If you're a wedding photographer, you may never really need to go back to older files so it might not be worth the effort of reorganizing them. If you're a stock photographer who makes a living from selling photos, organization should be one of your highest priorities. One big sale will make any invested time worth the effort.

**You mentioned Lightroom a couple of times earlier in this chapter. What exactly is Lightroom?**

As you work your way through this book, you'll find that Photoshop is a powerful piece of editing software. It enables you to completely transform an image. Sometimes, though, a photographer doesn't need all of Photoshop's power. This is especially true on the front end of the workflow when large quantities of images need to be organized and processed. Lightroom, which is the newest imaging product from Adobe, solves this problem by making it easier for photographers to efficiently organize and process photos.

Lightroom isn't a replacement for Photoshop; it's designed to work with it. In fact, its official name is Adobe Photoshop Lightroom. Lightroom is more like a combination of Adobe Bridge and Adobe Camera Raw, merging most of the features of these products in a single intuitive workspace. When more advanced tools or techniques are needed for a photo, it is moved into Photoshop for the heavy lifting Photoshop is famous for.

If you're not currently using Lightroom, it's not necessary to run out and get it now. But do put it onto your radar. If you decide to add it to your digital editing toolbox later on, many of the things you learn in this book can be applied to learning and using Lightroom at that time.

