KPS – Comparison: Lightroom Classic LrC   vs   Lightroom Lr (Jan 2024)

Summary

The comparison table below refers;

Whilst each user will have to decide for themselves, which version of Lightroom suits them best, the following observations may assist;

1. At the moment, LrC is the more powerful version of the two and is thus relatively "feature rich". That may change over time. For the time being it could be described as the flagship product, assuming you don't see cloud storage as a priority.

2. If you are new to Lightroom, either option would work well. See pro's and con's in table below.

3. If you are an established LrC user, with thousands of images already imported and catalogued, it makes little sense to switch to Lr.

4. If you need to view/edit images on many devices and from different geographic locations, the cloud storage facility in Lr is very useful.

5. The separate Lr package with 1Tb of cloud storage, costs around USD12 per month. (Can store about 40'000 images)

6. The creative suite, which includes Lr (with 20Gb of Cloud storage), LrC, Photoshop and Bridge et al, costs around USD10 per month.(20Gb can store about 800 images)

7. You can use both but can be confusing. I.e. LrC as prime package but with important images stored on Lr's Cloud facility.

8. Remember, on termination of subscription, you stand to lose all images in cloud storage. Not so with images stored on or exported to hard drives.

    Happy pondering!

Comparison Table

Feature	Lightroom Classic LrC	Lightroom Lr	Remarks
General			
Software plug-in support	Yes	No	Cannot move directly to plug-in from Lr. Only important for advanced post processing.
Original photos backed up to Cloud	No	Yes - optional	
Web, Book and slide-show modules	Yes	No	Seldom used
Map module and geotagging	Yes	No	Seldom used but using GPS co-ords to return to a shooting location can be handy.
Printing module	Yes	No	Seldom used
Smart Previews	Yes	No	Smart previews are used for editing images when storage drive is disconnected. Can get around this in Lr by copying images to Cloud
Smart objects in Photoshop			Cannot open an image as a Smart Object in Photoshop, from Lr
Library/Grid View			
Placing photos on local hard drive, from memory card	Can do within LrC, using the "import" procedure.	Must transfer these photos using other means, before viewing and editing with Lr	
Organise using folders	Yes	Yes, on "Local" mode only	
Organise with "Collections"	Yes	Yes, but called Albums	

Smart collections	Yes	No	Smart collections auto populate themselves – EG. all photos with a 4 star rating, all photos without keywords, all photos red colour label, and many more. Some smart collections are built in as standard and others are user configured.
Rename photos (on import)	Yes	No	
Convert RAW files to DNG (on import)	Yes	No	
"Spray can" for quick multiple image attribute changes	Yes	No	Very handy feature when working with many images in one session
Hierarchical keywords	Yes	No	Not important
Tethered photo capture	Yes	No	Nice feature for studio work
Survey and face recognition view	Yes	No	Seldom used
Soft proofing	Yes	No	Not important
Colour Labels	Yes	No	Colour labels are handy for demarcating photo strings such as Pano, HDR or focus stacking sequences.
"AI" key-wording	No	Yes	
Create snapshots	Yes	No	
Create virtual copies	Yes	No for local files, yes for Cloud files	
Create actual copies	Yes	No	
Photo search filter	Can search all imported photos in one operation using titles (text), attributes, keywords, flags, labels meta data etc	Ditto for cloud based photos but search limited to open folder only when in Local (hard drive) mode.	LrC search engine is significantly more powerful, for searching locally stored images. This is a VIP issue

Export			
Rename photos on Export	Very easy – with many options	Easy, but with fewer options	
Resizing for KPS and Salons	Easy	Not as easy	
Export file types	JPEG, JPEG XL, AVIF, PSD, TIFF, PNG, DNG, Original	JPEG, JPEG XL, AVIF, TIFF, DNG, Original	
Export Presets	Yes	No	
Develop/Edit			
Adjustment history	Yes	No	
Masking presets	Yes	No	
Editing presets	Yes	Don't think so	Very useful tool
Returning modified images from Photoshop, back to Lightroom.	When saving from PS it creates a new version of the updated processing , both on hard drive and in the LrC catalogue, each time you work on the picture.	When saving from PS it creates a new version of the updated processing, on hard drive, each time you work on the picture.	Handy for comparison purposes.

Doug Emanuel
Jan 2024