
TUNER PHOTOGRAPHY

EXPRESS YOURSELF CREATIVELY

Creating a Folder System For Your Digital Images



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Tuner Photography & Up-to-the-Click Training

Creating a Master Folder System

The Digital Image Dilemma – so many images, so little time

As a digital photographer you have numerous image formats to store, process and retrieve. Without a system for filing these images, the more you shoot the harder it will be to keep track of your favorite images.

Think of a digital filing system in the same way that you file different paper documents. When you have numerous documents to keep track of, you probably create a folder, label the folder and file the folder by topic, date, source or in alphabetical order. When you need the document again you can easily retrieve the folder from your filing system. Your digital images are like those paper documents. However, instead of paper images you have digital NEF (RAW), JPEG, TIFF and possibly HDR formats.

Let's say you have 300 images from a vacation filed away in a folder titled "family vacation." When you look at the folder title on your hard drive, you have no way of knowing if that was the vacation in 2007 or 2009 without opening the folder and opening an image. But if the folder was titled 08-06-23 Hawaiian Vacation, you can instantly tell what year, month, date and location the images are from. If you title the folders starting with the year (08), then Month (06) and day (23), and you place all the folders for 2008 in a larger folder titled Archived 2008 Photographs, when you open the archived folder all the dates will be in order and you won't have to spend time searching for those family vacation photos. Nothing is more frustrating than filing a folder of images and not remembering the name of the file folder.

Master Forms

Back to those paper documents for a moment. If you had a paper document form that you used frequently you'd probably print out the form as a master and store it in a file. Then when you needed the form, you could quickly pull up the form, duplicate it, fill it out and replace the folder. We normally create master forms for frequently used items for efficiency. You can do the same for your digital image folders.

Organizing Digital Images

When importing images from the memory card to the computer, I need to create a folder to hold the new images. Instead of creating a new folder each time I import, I use a MASTER folder.

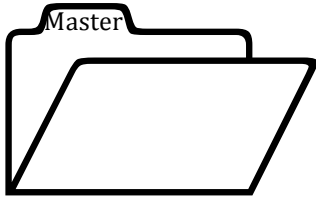
I keep the MASTER folder on my desktop for quick access. The next time I import images, I simply duplicate the MASTER folder, change the title to the date of capture and I'm ready to import the images.

The purpose of this folder system is two-fold. First the system is efficient and second by creating a MASTER folder and duplicating it, all my folders are organized in the same manner. A photographer friend told me about this system and it's one of the best digital workflow ideas I've run across.

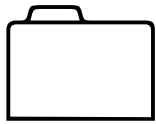
Creating a Master Folder System

Five steps to creating your own folder system.

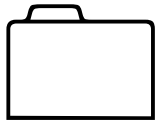
Step 1 – Open a new folder on your desktop. Name the folder **MASTER** or any other name you want to use.



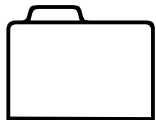
Step 2 – Open five additional folders on your desktop. Title these folders:



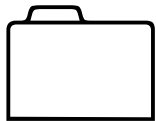
A. Original Images



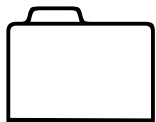
B. Working NEF (RAW)



C. Converted JPEG



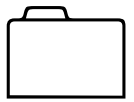
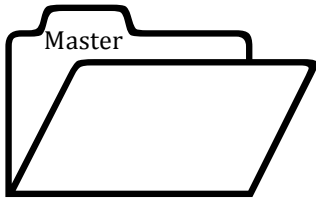
D. Internet / Email



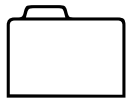
E. TIFF Images

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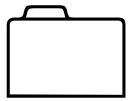
Step 3 – Drag the five sub-folders into the Master folder. You now have one MASTER folder that contains five sub-folders.



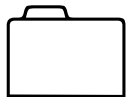
A. **Original Images**



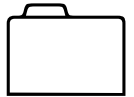
B. **Working NEF (RAW)**



C. **Converted JPEG**



D. **Internet / Email**



E. **TIFF Images**

Step 4 – Move the **MASTER** Folder to a location on your hard drive that you can easily access.

Step 5 – When you are ready to import images, navigate to the location of the **MASTER** folder, duplicate the folder, move the duplicated folder to the location where you keep the digital images (Picture folder) and change the folder name from **MASTER** to the date the images where captured (09-10-01 for 2009 October 1).

Import the images to **09-10-01, A. Original Images**. The **A. Original Images** folder always serves as the destination folder for all images.

Creating a Master Folder System

Using the folder system

Once the images have been imported I'm ready to begin post-processing the images. I open folder **A. Original Images** in **Photo Mechanic** and begin the process of color labeling (rating) the images. After the images have been labeled, I open **A. Original Images** folder in **Capture NX 2** to begin processing the labeled images.

After an image has been processed and is ready to be saved, I select **Save As** and save the processed image into the **B. Working NEF** folder, not back into **A. Original Images**. This way my original image is still in **A. Original Images** folder and is untouched by the processing. The image that has been processed is saved in **B. Working NEF**. Handling the images in this manner means that I always have a back up image in folder **A. Original Images** and my processed images are saved in **B. Working NEF (RAW)**.

Breakdown of the folders and how the images that are saved.

- A. **Original Image** – Contains all the imported images.
- B. **Working NEF (RAW)** – Contains only the images that have been processed.
- C. **Converted JPEG** – Contains the images that have been resized and **Saved As** a JPEG image (usually for printing).
- D. **Internet / Email** – Contains the images that have been resized and **Saved As** JPEG's for emailing or posted on a internet web site.
- E. **TIFF Images** – Contains HDR tone mapped images.

The best thing to do with any workflow is to adapt it to your style of working and organizing. Give the filing system a try, then make it your own by making it fit your needs.

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