

Digital Workflow II

Camera to Output

By Vinnie Kempf *January 17, 2006*

Prerequisite

- If you are going to produce consistent accurate results you need color management
 - All input devices need to be calibrated and profiled such as a film and flatbed scanner. I have found no need to profile a digital camera
 - All output devices need to be calibrated and profiled such as a monitor a printer and the paper used in the printer.

Camera to Computer

- Use a Flash Card reader
 - They are inexpensive
 - They are fast
 - They have a USB interface and the reader appears as another disc drive to the machine
 - They install easily
- Setup a Temporary file folder
 - Drop and Drag or Copy and Paste all image files on the card to the Temporary folder

Example

- Use the Windows Explorer to copy image files from the Flash Card to the Temporary folder

Workflow in Temporary Folder

- Rename the files if the file numbers have wrapped around or using more than one camera
 - Use the Adobe Bridge and the Tools/Batch Rename feature
 - I suggest adding an alpha prefix to the file name
 - Select all files that you want to rename

Example

- Show file rename of images in Temporary folder
 - Rename IMG6276 & IMG6353
 - Show how to select multiple files

Workflow in Temporary Folder

- First edit of images
 - Use Photoshop Bridge
 - Change to Filmstrip view with either horizontal or vertical thumbnails.
 - Delete bad ones to the Recycle Bin with a right mouse click on the thumbnail
 - You cannot avoid the Recycle Bin

Example

- Show Bridge to view and edit images
 - Set Bridge to Filmstrip view
 - Show how to change from vertical to horizontal view

Workflow in Temporary Folder

- Keep two copies of all your images
 - This is **MORE** than worth the expense and time
 - I suggest the hard disc copy be used for all work and a CD or DVD copy as a backup.
 - Hard disc space is inexpensive today and the access time is a lot faster than CD or DVD
 - I setup a hard disc folder that has the same name as the Volume Name of the CD or DVD

Workflow in Temporary Folder

- Once the two copies are complete you can safely erase the Flash Card
 - Use the Windows Explorer and don't believe the old wife's tale about only erasing in the camera
- Also erase the files in the Temporary Folder

Example

- Using the Windows Explorer copy all files from Temporary folder to hard disk and CD
- Erase Flash Card
- Erase Files in Temporary folder

Workflow in Hard Disc Folder

- Select files on the hard disk that are competition candidates
 - I use the Film Strip view in the Bridge
 - I mark the competition material with a star
 - Select the thumbnail with a left click and then set the first dot to a star
 - Once all competition images are selected Export the cache
 - Filter the Bridge View to show only 1 or More star images
 - I also catalog all these competition candidates in a Microsoft Access database

Example

- Select the hard disc folder in the Bridge
- Switch to Film Strip view in the Bridge
- Star some images
- Export the cache
- Filter the Bridge View to show starred images

Image Adjustments

- Adjust the dynamic range, contrast ratio and the exposure
 - Use Levels Adjustment Layer or Shadow/Highlight Adjustment but not both
 - If contrast ratio is reasonable use Levels and if not use Shadow/Highlights
 - For Levels Adjustment use Threshold option
 - For Shadow/Highlight use Shadow settings of 50,40,100 and Highlight settings of 0,70,100
 - Save these settings as default settings

Example

- Adjust one image with reasonable contrast, IMG6276, with Levels Adjustment Layer
- Adjust another with too large a contrast range, AIMG4964, using Highlight/Shadows
 - You can then use a Levels Adjustment Layer to change just the midtone or exposure value

Image Adjustments

- Modify the image by adding a little saturation
 - Like changing film from Kodachrome 64 to Velvia 50
 - Use Hue/Saturation adjustment layer
 - Move Saturation slider
 - Do not get heavy-handed with saturation. When I go near 20% I start to look very critically

Example

- Use image BIMG5689
 - First adjust Levels with Levels Adjustment layer
 - Then use Hue/Saturation Adjustment Layer to increase saturation

Image Adjustments

- May need to crop image
 - Cropping removes unwanted parts of the image
 - After cropping check Pixel attributes and see if enough are left for the output you want

Example

- Crop image, IMG6276, but maintain 2 x 3 Aspect ratio.
 - Easiest way is to set Crop tool to 3 inches by 2 inches with no resolution
 - Check Pixel dimensions
 - For a 12 x 18 inch print you need something close to 4320 x 6480 pixels
 - For a digital competition image you need no greater than 768 pixels in either dimension
 - For a slide you need something close to 2000 x 3000 pixels
 - Resample if necessary but beware

Output Adjustments

- First save the file as a Master file before adjusting it for the output media
 - Save as PSD file
- Resize the image for its output
 - For a slide output save it as 1 inch by 1.5 inch image
 - The image should have a resolution of 2000 PPI
 - A better way to look at this is the image should be at least 2000 x 3000 pixels.

Output Adjustments

- For a print image multiply the short dimension by 360 to obtain the short pixel dimension
 - A 12 x 18 inch print should be 4320 x 6480 pixels
 - The desktop printer always wants 360 pixels per inch
- For a digital competition the image should be no greater than 768 pixels in both dimensions.
 - Another way of looking at this, imagine a 768 x 768 pixel frame and the image must fit within it

Final Procedures

- Sharpen the file after it is sized for output
 - When sharpening set the screen image size to Actual Pixels
 - Any other screen size will cause image pixels to be mapped to screen pixels
 - Do not get heavy-handed with sharpening
- Save a different copy for each output size
 - Again you need to make two copies of each file to protect from loss

Example

- Use IMG6276
- Adjust with levels
- Crop image and maintain a 2 x 3 aspect ratio
- Size image for projection to 768 x 512 pixels by resampling
- Use Smart Sharpen with Lens Blur option