Photoshop World 2021
Making Lightroom Classic Haul Butt: Optimizing Your Workflow
By Rob Sylvan

One of the fundamental principles behind Lightroom Classic's existence is to make a photographer's workflow more efficient. To this end, there are a variety of settings, features, functions, tasks, and ways of thinking that can help you optimize your workflow to suit your needs. Join Rob as he explains how to get the most performance out of the system you have, demonstrates key features within a typical workflow that will help you become more efficient, and shows you a variety of tips and tricks that save you time and help you feel more in control.

We love LrC for the power of the Develop module, but there is so much more to love about how it can streamline our entire post processing and asset management workflows. In this session I'm going to share some of my favorite practices for becoming more efficient. One of LrC's greatest strengths is its ability to help you create a consistent foundation to your workflow that saves you time through its efficiency and gives you dependable results. In fact, there's a number of things you can do right from the start that will help you create a more consistent workflow. In concert with all of the tips and techniques I will share in this session, I can't stress strongly enough that you start with a walk through of this fantastic document published by Adobe for optimizing Lightroom Classic. That document will answer your questions about hardware, key preference settings, and more. Putting those tips and these practices together will truly supercharge your experience.

Making the Most of Lightroom Classic's Interface

LrC's interface isn't as customizable as Photoshop's, but it can be changed in a number of ways to maximize the space devoted to your photos, to make your workflow more efficient, and to hide the parts you just don't use very often.

Panel Groups

There are four main panels that appear in all LrC modules. They can be manipulated as needed to allow you to control the size of the center workspace where your photos appear, as well as to only reveal the set of tools required for the task at hand. These four panels are called the Left Panel Group, Right Panel Group, Module Picker (top), and Filmstrip (bottom).
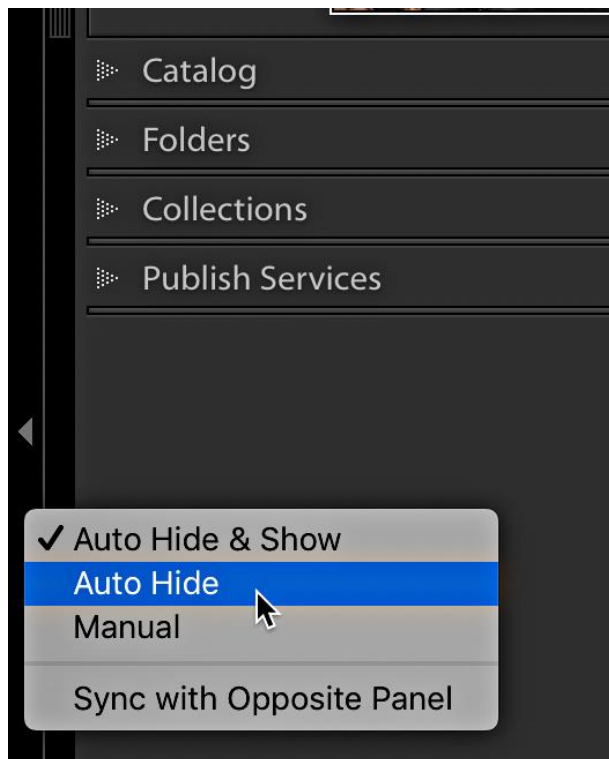
Each of these panels can be collapsed completely by clicking the outside edge of the panel (you don't need to click the actual arrow on the outside edge). However, if you right-click the outside edge you'll get a contextual menu that gives you a greater level of control.

I find the default option of Auto Hide & Show a little annoying as it will automatically show the panel if your cursor gets too close to the edge, and this happens too often for my taste. If I need to collapse a panel group, I prefer to set each panel to Auto Hide instead. When you choose Auto Hide the panel automatically collapses and it won't expand again until you manually click that panel's outside edge. The panel will then appear at a low opacity and allow you to access everything inside that panel, but as soon as you move your cursor off the panel it automatically hides again. This really helps me maximize the space devoted to my photos.

Of course, as with most things in Lightroom, there's more than one way to get the job done. There are keyboard shortcuts for hiding/showing each panel group, but instead of giving you each one I recommend checking out the complete list of all shortcuts. You can also go to the Help > [ModuleName] Shortcuts menu, where you'll find the keyboard shortcuts listed for the module you are viewing.

That said, there are two keyboard shortcuts I use all the time that are easy to remember. The first is pressing Tab to show/hide both the left and right panel groups simultaneously. The second is pressing Shift+Tab to show/hide all four main panels at once.

While you may most often want to collapse panels to get them out of the way you can also click the inside edge and drag inward to make the left and/or right panels wider. I often make the right panel group in the Develop module wider to get a finer level of control on the sliders.

Similarly, you can make the Filmstrip taller or shorter by clicking the edge just below the Toolbar and dragging up or down (respectively). Note, if you make the Filmstrip too small the icons that appear on the thumbnails will go away.

Individual Panels

Now that you have a handle on how to manage the larger panels, let's take a look at what you can do with the smaller panels contained within the Left and Right Panel Groups.

To cut down on the amount of scrolling you do in a day, as well as to only reveal the tools you need for a given job, you can expand or collapse each individual panel by clicking on each panel header (not just the arrow). As an alternative, you can Mac: CMD-click / Win: Ctrl-click any panel header to expand or collapse all the panels on that side in one fell swoop.

A really neat trick is to Mac: Option-click / Win: Alt-click any panel header to engage what is called Solo Mode. With Solo Mode enabled you'll only be able to open a single panel within the larger panel group at a time. This makes it very easy to switch between panels with a minimum amount (if any) scrolling. As soon as you expand a new panel the last one you were using automatically collapses. Mac: Option-click / Win: Alt-click any panel header a second time to disengage Solo Mode. Note that while the Navigator, Histogram, and Preview panels within the various modules can be collapsed or expanded individually, they are not included in Solo Mode or the expand all/hide all commands.

One panel option that most people seem to find by accident is the ability to completely remove a given panel from the panel group so that you no longer even see its header label. If you right-click any panel header— except the ones noted above—you can simply uncheck any panel from the contextual menu that appears and it will disappear from the group. Just re-check that panel in the menu to bring it back. You can also restore panels from the Window > Panels menu. Later on we'll look at a special trick for reordering panels in the Develop module. Note the command for Solo Mode lives in there too.
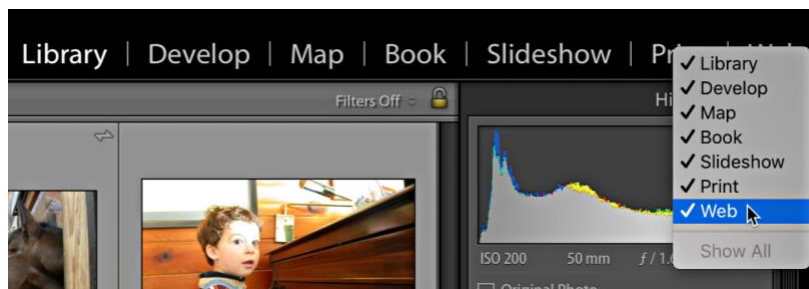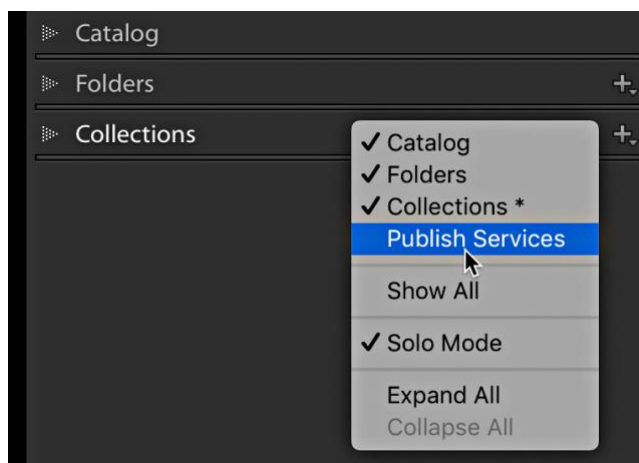
You have the same level of control up in the Module Picker too. Just ctrl-click/right-click the Module Picker and uncheck any module you no longer want to see listed there.

This doesn't remove the module completely, just removes its button from the Module Picker.

Screen Modes

Taking a step back to look at the interface as a whole we also have the ability to switch between a few different screen modes. You can find all of the modes listed under Window >

Screen Mode, along with their respective keyboard shortcuts. The most important thing you need to know is that you can cycle through them all one at a time by pressing Shift+F. I also want to point out that you can still access the menu bar while in Full Screen mode.

Just move your cursor to the very top of the screen and the menu bar will pop down automatically. To see a single image full screen (called, "Full Screen Preview") press the F key, which is really handy when you want to clear all clutter and just see nothing but your photo filling the screen.

Lights Out

One last trick up your interface sleeve is Lights Out mode. Lights Out comes in three flavors; Lights On, Lights Dim, and Lights Off. Lights On is the default and what you use all the time. Press the L key once to transition to Lights Dim, where the selected photo(s) remains at full brightness, but the interface dims. Press the L key again to transition to Lights Off where the interface fades to black completely. I love using Lights Off in conjunction with the Crop Tool to get a real time preview of the final crop. On the Interface tab of the Preferences, you can set the Dim Level and even change the Lights Out color from black if you wish. Press L one last time to turn the lights back on.

Everything you learn about the interface extends throughout all of the modules within LrC, so the more proficient you get, the more it helps you as you move through your workflow. Let's take a quick look at a few tips to help you through the import process.

Import Tips

The main goal of every import process is to introduce your photos to the LrC catalog. The most important piece of information added to the catalog at this time is the exact location for where your photo is stored on the destination drive. You can of course use LrC to move photos to new locations after import, which keeps the path stored in the catalog up to date as well as relocate your photos. The most frequent form of import is where we are copying photos from a memory card to a destination drive, and any type of repeatable behavior is a good candidate for standardization to increase efficiency. LrC is good at helping us select the correct source when importing from a memory card, so let's look at other key items.

Use Embedded and Sidecar

The Embedded and Sidecar option can be found in the File Handling panel. This was an addition that slipped into LrC a while ago, but I've been using it ever since and I love how much faster it

makes the import process. Expand the File Handling panel and choose Embedded & Sidecar from the Build Previews drop-down menu. This tells Lightroom to import the embedded JPG from the raw photo (or accompanying JPG if you shoot raw+JPG and there isn't a large enough embedded preview) to display as the preview you see in Library. This makes going through and making your initial selects (see my PUXZ tip later) much faster because you don't have to wait for LrC to render all new previews. LrC will quietly update the previews during idle time or when you switch to Develop.
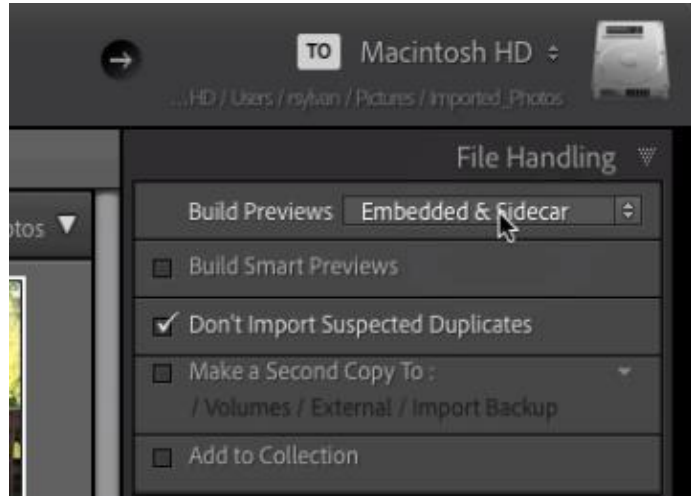
Consistent Naming Practices

I don't believe that there is a single right way to name files and folders, but as long as the method you choose makes sense to you (most importantly) and it can scale up over time, then that should do the trick. LrC can help you with both of these jobs, so let's look at folder names first.

Folder Naming

I like to use LrC to create folders as part of the import process, and I also like to use the automated date-based folder name structure as it scales nicely into the future without me having to do anything more. The one thing I don't like about LrC's automated folder naming functionality is that you can't customize the date-generated names to include more than just a date. However, this limitation is easily overcome after import. Here's my approach:

Step One: In the Destination panel of the Import dialog set the Organize option to By date and choose a Date Format that suits your needs.

Step Two: Select the parent folder where you want LrC to create these date-based subfolders.

Note: LrC creates the subfolders based on the capture date of the photos being imported, and these new folders will appear in the Destination panel in an italicized font.

Step Three: Configure the rest of the Import dialog options and click the Import button.

Once the import process is complete you'll see the new folder(s) appear in the Folders panel. At this point I've got the date-based folders, which is great, but I also want to add a descriptive word or two to the folder name to help me know what the folder contains. This is easily done simply by ctrl-clicking (PC: right-clicking) the folder name and choosing Rename from the contextual menu that appears. This opens the Rename Folder dialog box where you can add a word or two and click Save, which renames the folder on your drive and updates the catalog to reflect this change.
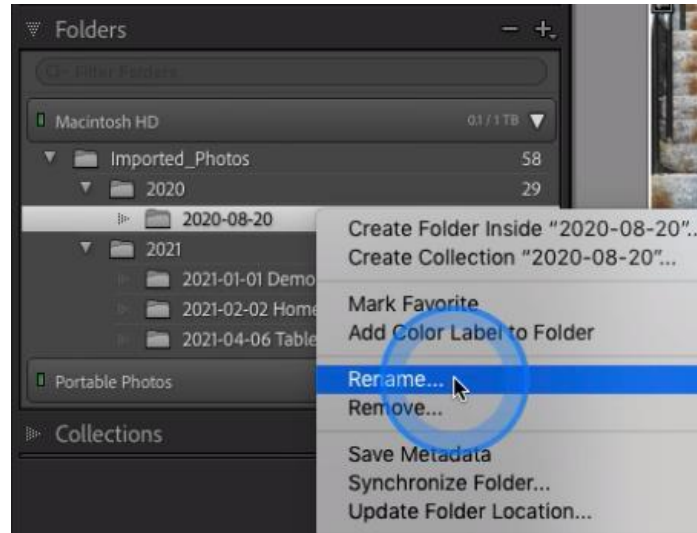
For me, this process gives me the best of all worlds, which is an automated process that contains meaningful information and scales nicely into the future.

File Naming

When it comes to individual file names I also look to LrC to automate the process. Again, this is an area with a lot of room for individual customization as we all have our own needs to fill, but the basic process starts with creating a custom filename template that includes the information that is important to you. Once you create a filename template you can configure it to be applied from the File Renaming panel of the import screen, or you can apply it at will from the Library module after import. You'll need to decide where it suits your workflow best, but I know some people prefer to rename after import so that they can delete bad photos then rename all remaining files with a continuous sequence number that doesn't contain any missing numbers.

You can access the Filename Template Editor from any place you can rename photos. From the Library module, go to Library > Rename Photo(s), then click the File Naming drop-down menu in the Rename dialog box and choose Edit. From the Import screen, expand the File Renaming panel, click the Template drop-down menu and choose Edit. Once the editor is open the steps for creating a new template are the same.
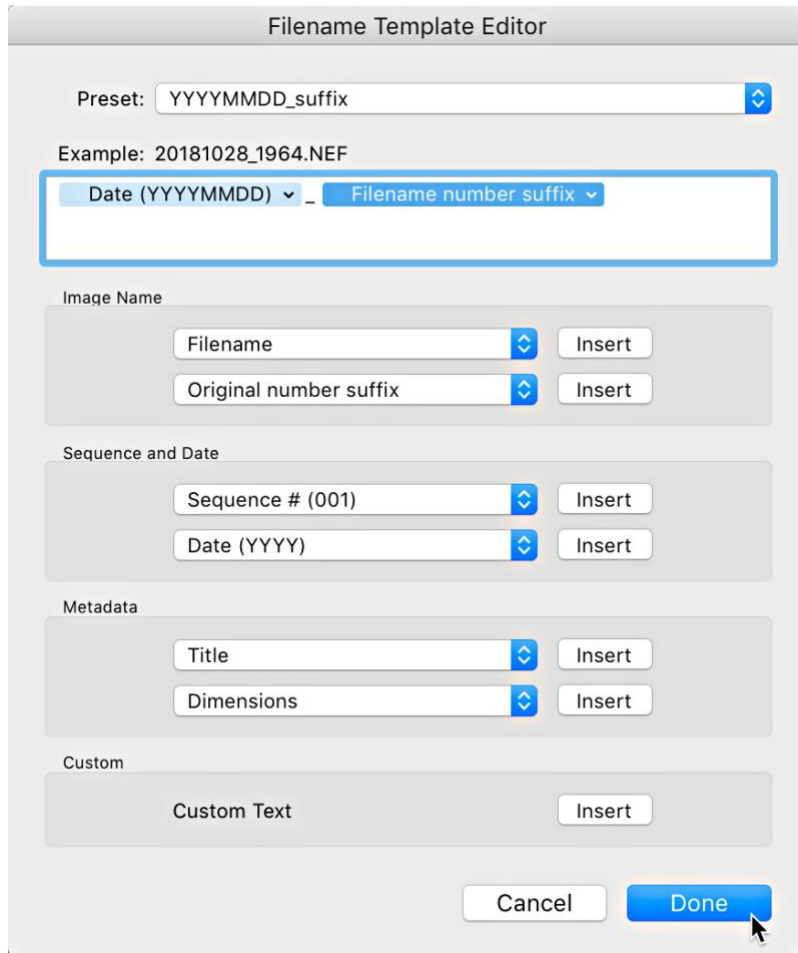
Step One: Delete any existing tokens from the editing window to start fresh.

Step Two: Choose any combination of tokens to create a template that suits your desired file name convention.

Note: You can hard code data into the filename template simply by typing into the editing window. For example, I often enter a hyphen or underscore separator by typing this character between tokens.

Step Three: Click the Preset drop-down menu and choose Save current settings as a new preset to save your template for reuse. Give it a meaningful name that represents the tokens used.

A simple template I use consists of the Date token in YYYYMMDD format, followed by an underscore, followed by the Filename number suffix token (this is the camera generated sequence number without the three letter prefix), which is shown in the figure. These can be quite sophisticated, but I lean toward keeping it short and sweet.

Consistent Metadata

A metadata template containing your core contact and copyright information is another way to ensure you are consistently applying the same information to all of your photos. Once created this can easily by applied during import via the Apply During Import panel. You can create a Metadata template from the Import screen by clicking the Metadata drop-down menu and choosing New, or you can access the same editor from the Library module by going to Metadata > Edit Metadata Presets.

Once the Edit Metadata Presets dialog is open you only want to enter information that apply to all photos equally. For me this includes all of the IPTC Copyright and IPTC Creator fields (with the exception of my street address). The one thing to keep in mind with this template is that you only want to check the box next to a field you are customizing with your own information, otherwise leave the boxes unchecked to retain any existing metadata that may exist. I have

seen some people make the mistake of checking the box for the GPS field only to find that this makes LrC ignore the data from that field. Similarly, make sure there is no unwanted information (like keywords way at the bottom) that you don't want to include by accident. Once configured (and double-checked), click the Preset drop-down menu and choose Save current settings as a new preset to save it for reuse.
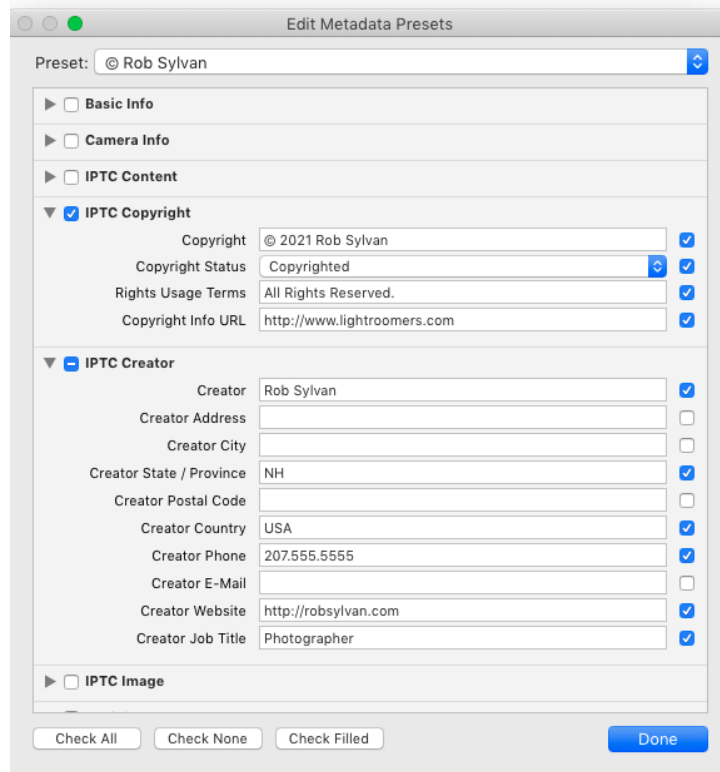
Create an Import Preset

Once you've configured the Import dialog with your new settings, click the Import Preset drop-down menu (bottom-center of the Import dialog) and choose Save current settings as new preset. Give the preset a meaningful name and use that every import from now on.
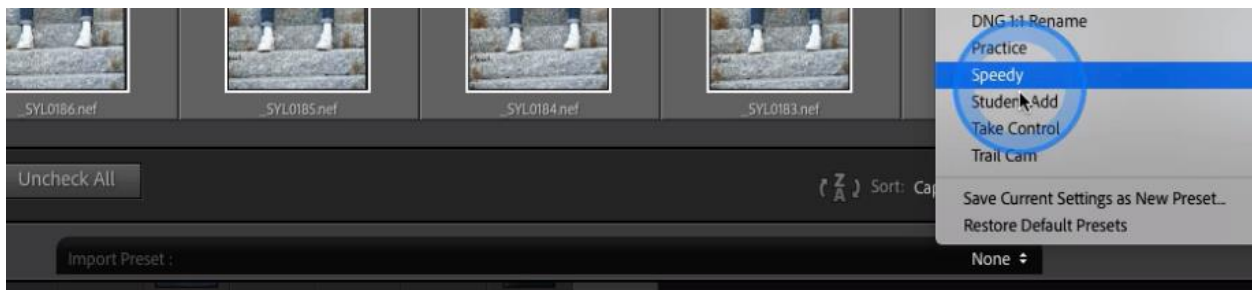
Once you are through the import process you land back in the Library module with your newly imported photos ready for you to go through and make your selects.

Making Selects (PUXZ)

One of the best-kept secrets for improving speed in the process of separating the wheat from the chaff is the Auto Advance option under the Photo menu in the Library module. Give this a try, go to the Photo menu and check Auto Advance (it may already be checked), press the G key to jump to Grid view (if you are not there already), select a photo and apply a rating, a flag, or a color label to that photo. As soon as any one of those is applied (whether by keyboard shortcut or button click) LrC automatically advances focus to the next photo. This is a huge time saver!

The most efficient way to utilize this is with keyboard shortcuts, and my favorites are P for pick, X for reject, and U for unflag. With Auto Advance enabled and those three keys I can very quickly move through a large volume of photos and end up identifying the ones I want to keep and the ones that will be deleted. If I come to a photo that I am on the fence about I use the U key, which doesn't apply a flag but it will trigger Auto Advance to move me on to the next photo (think of it as a skip key). If you need to zoom in to check focus, just press and hold Z to zoom into 1:1 and then release the Z key to return to grid view and continue flagging away. With all of your flags (or star ratings) applied, take advantage of the various filtering options to help you move forward (*check out my Photoshop World session on Getting Organized in Lightroom Classic to learn even more*).

Hopefully by now you've picked up some great tips for working smarter in the Library module, so let's head over to Develop and further streamline our workflows.

Consistent Develop Starting Place

With your basic file management and metadata under control you can shift your attention toward creating a consistent default setting for your raw photos that can help your photos look more like they do in the camera right out of the gate and save you a lot of clicks down the road. This also allows you to save any Develop presets you might want to apply during import for more creative pursuits.

What is the Raw Default?

When you import raw photos into LrC some settings must be applied to the raw data to serve as a starting point for your edits. The un-customized settings are called the Adobe Defaults, which applies the Adobe Color camera profile, zeros out almost all other settings, and applies a baseline configuration of sharpening and noise reduction in the Detail panel. Note, this only affects raw photos, so you won't see any changes to JPG, PSD, PNG, or TIF files (which do not have any settings at all applied to them by default).

There's nothing wrong with the Adobe Default settings, and there is nothing wrong with keeping them as-is. However, if you find that you always end up applying the same settings to all new raw photos (like lens correction or a specific camera profile or different sharpening

settings), then you might benefit from customizing the defaults to include your preferred settings. All this does is give you a new, and customized, starting point for your raw photos.

Where is the Raw Default Set?

The new system is found under Lightroom Classic > Preferences > Presets (PC: Edit > Preferences > Presets). Here you will find an entirely new panel called Raw Defaults. The old method for customizing default settings has been removed.

Within the Raw Defaults panel you have three basic options for the Master control:
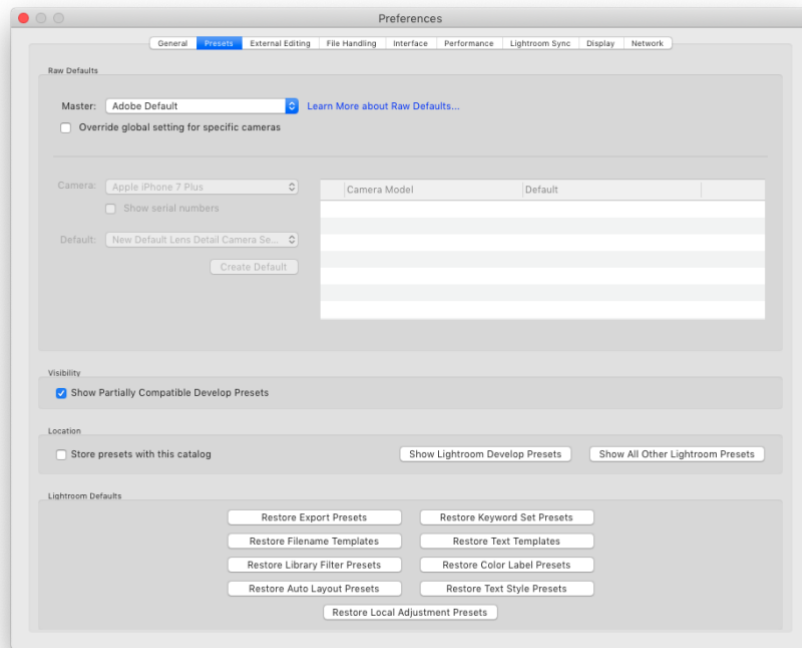
Adobe Default: The same Adobe defaults as we've had in the past. Adobe Color is the default profile, and most settings are zeroed out (with the exception of the sliders in the Detail panel).

Camera Settings: The same as Adobe Default except that a profile will be selected to match your in-camera picture style selection (instead of Adobe Color). So, if you set your camera to shoot in B&W (monochrome), choosing Camera Settings would honor that and you will see that a monochrome profile has been applied. Note, unless you shoot with one of the Nikon Z series cameras, it just selects a matching profile and does not change any other settings. Nikon Z series owners may also see other settings in Basic and Detail panels change based on in-camera settings (hopefully we'll see this extend to other camera makes and models in the future). This is an exciting new development, and I hope we see this idea of LrC doing a better job of emulating the in-camera settings continue to evolve.

Preset: You choose a Develop preset that will be applied by default to all raw photos from all cameras (or just specific camera models). This will basically take the place of the old custom camera raw default option. You can include anything that you are able to include in a preset. You can also combine this with the Camera Settings option above.
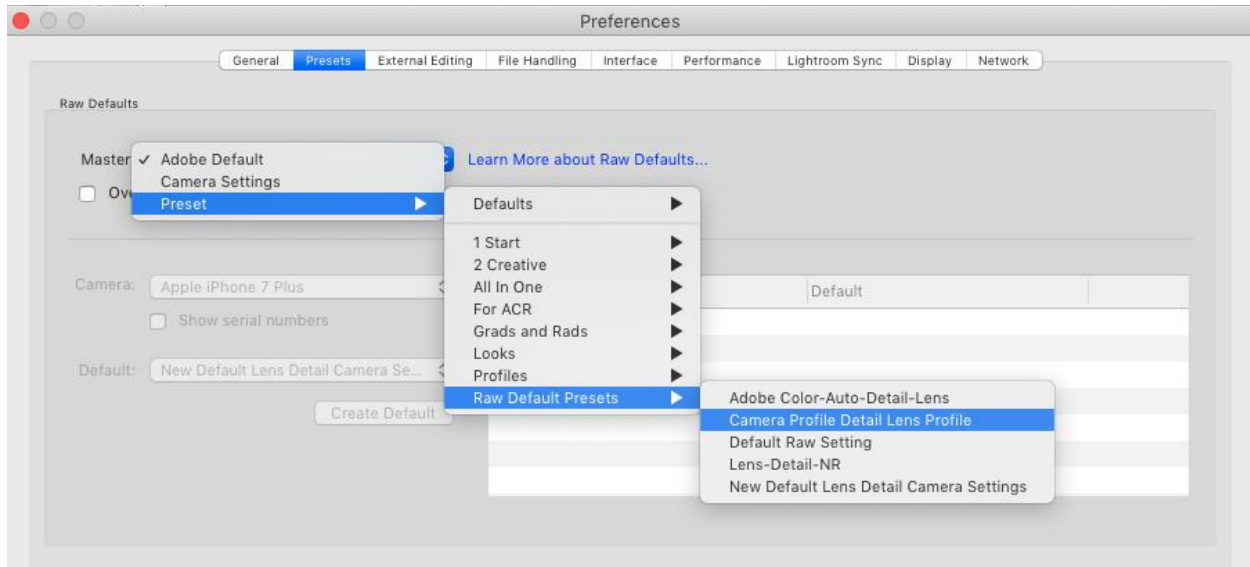
Set the Master Default

If you only have a single camera or you want all raw photos from all camera models to have the same base default settings, then customizing the Master setting is the first thing to do. In the old system we needed to create a custom default individually for all cameras even if we wanted to apply the same settings, so this is another improvement over the old system. Let's imagine a few scenarios to help make sense of this.

Scenario One: You don't want to change anything at all. In this case, leave it set to Adobe Default.

Scenario Two: You want to experiment with letting Lightroom Classic change the profile for all raw photos based on the in-camera picture style you choose, but leave all other settings the same as Adobe Default. In this case, choose Camera Settings from the Master drop-down menu.

Scenario Three: You have a preset that you always apply on import, and you want to make that preset the new default for all raw photos, or you want to create a preset for this purpose and make that preset the raw default. In this case, you would use the Preset option in the Master drop-down menu to navigate to and select the desired preset.

Create a Preset

Let's create a preset that simply enables the Auto settings function and leaves everything else at the Adobe Default, but also includes the new Camera Settings function for choosing a profile based on in-camera picture style. This is just an example, so feel free to include only the settings that make sense to your workflow.

Step One: Select a raw photo and click the Reset button to ensure it is at the Adobe Default settings with everything zeroed out.

Step Two: Go to Develop > New Preset to open the New Develop Preset dialog box. Name this preset Camera Settings Auto (or whatever makes sense to you).

Step Three: Click the Group drop-down menu and create a new group called Raw Default Presets (or whatever makes sense to you).

Step Four: Click the Check None box, and then only check the boxes for Auto Settings and Process Version. By not checking the box for Treatment & Profile Lightroom Classic uses the previously mentioned Camera Settings function for choosing the profile (and if you are shooting with a Nikon Z series, possibly some additional settings). Then click Create to complete the process. The new preset will appear in the Preset panel within the group you designated.

Step Five: Go to the Presets tab of the Preferences, and click the Master drop-down menu, go to Preset, and select to the preset you created under the Presets menu (look for the preset group you designated). You should then see the name of your preset loaded in the Master drop-down menu.

From this point forward, all newly imported raw photos will have the settings included in the preset applied to them by default. Likewise, clicking the Reset button in Develop will reset to the new default settings. Take some test photos with different in-camera picture styles applied, and then import them and give your new defaults a test drive.

Updating The Preset

After doing some testing you decide that you want to stick with the Camera Settings option for choosing profiles, but you don't want to have Auto Settings applied AND you want to include a lens profile correction. Let's update that preset.

Step One: With a raw photo selected, click Reset to set to defaults. Then go to the Lens Corrections panel and check the boxes for Remove Chromatic Aberration and Enable Profile Corrections. Leave everything else at the default.

Step Two: Right-click the Camera Settings Auto preset we created earlier (or whatever you named it), and choose Update with Current Settings to open the Update Develop Preset dialog box.

Step Three: Only check boxes for Lens Profile Corrections, Chromatic Aberration, and Process Version. Leave every other box unchecked. Click Update.

Go ahead and click the Reset button and the selected photo should retain the profile that matches the in-camera picture style, the tonal value sliders in the Basic panel should reset from

Auto, and the boxes in the Lens Corrections panel should be checked. To update your default settings in the future, just update that preset. Note, be careful not to delete that preset or your defaults will revert to the Camera Settings option without telling you.

Make Defaults Specific to Each Camera

Now that you have a Master setting you like, what if you want to have a different default setting for one or more cameras you shoot with? In that case you'll want to check the Use defaults specific to camera model checkbox under the Master drop-down menu. Once enabled, it brings the bottom section of the new panel to life.
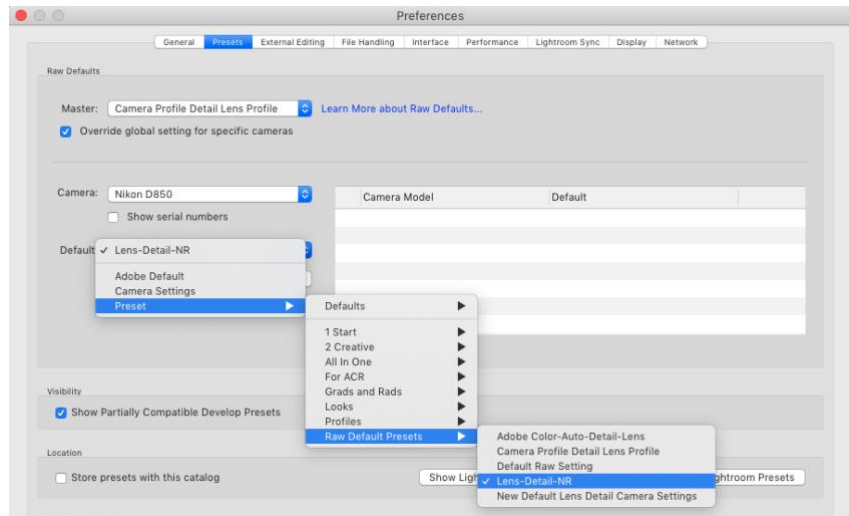
Using the Camera drop-down menu you can select the camera model you want to create a custom default setting for, then use the Default drop-down menu below that to choose from the same three options I outlined above, but for that specific camera only. Note, if at first you don't see the desired camera model listed, exit the Preferences and view a folder or collection containing photos from the desired camera and return to this Preference setting. Once configured as desired, click the Create Default button to add that configuration to the panel. Note, if you need to set your defaults based on camera body serial number, check the Show serial number box and you'll be able to choose each camera body individually.

Once you've applied a camera specific default you can modify, update, or delete that setting via the drop-down menu at the far-right of the panel. Under that menu you will see options for choosing Adobe Default, Camera Settings, accessing all of your develop presets, or deleting that camera specific default setting.
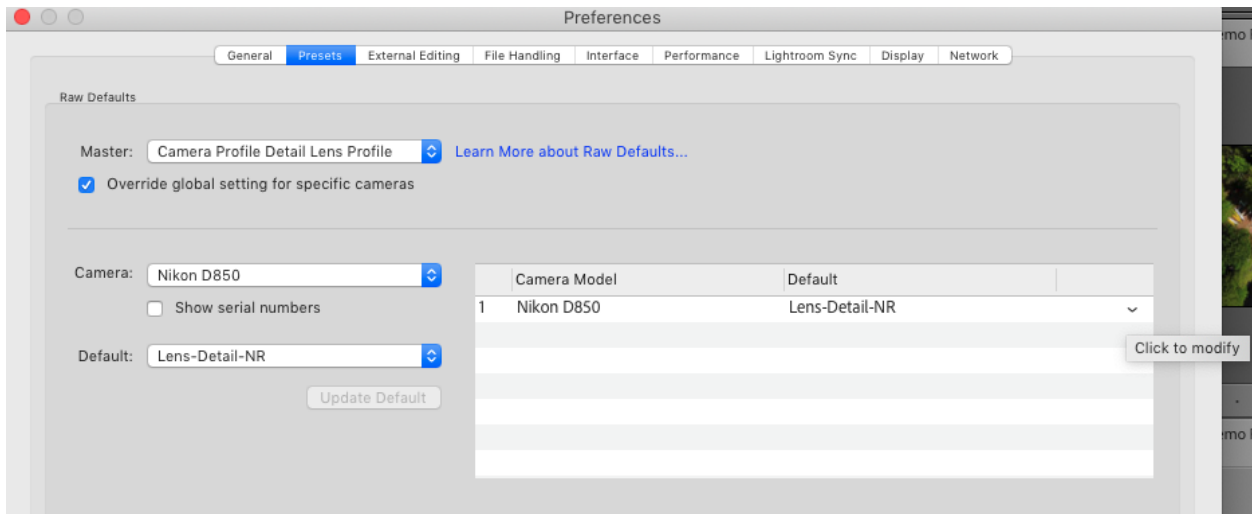
You can of course still continue to apply a preset during import or when tethering or using Auto Import. The Raw Default setting you choose is applied first, then any import preset is applied on top of the default, and then anything you apply manually after import comes next. Think of the Raw Default as a time saving measure to get you to your preferred starting point. Think of import presets as creative or job specific additions to your default settings to get you to a different starting point. If all of this seems too overwhelming at first, just leave it at Adobe Defaults and do all your editing in Develop manually. There's no wrong answer, just a few options to consider.

One final note, the old shortcut for resetting to the Adobe defaults (useful if you had a custom default setting using the old method) has been discontinued in this latest update. So pressing Command + Shift + R (PC: Ctrl + Shift + R) does the same as just pressing Reset, which is to reset the photo based on the settings you've chosen in the Raw Defaults section of the preferences. If you want a way to get to all zeroed settings and the Adobe Color profile, then you'll want to create a preset that does that, and just click the preset when/if needed.

Favorite Presets

Another frequently used item in a LrC workflow are presets. If you press D to switch over to Develop and expand the Presets panel you may or may not see a Favorites folder at the top of the panel. You'll only see it if you've marked some presets as a favorite. To do this, as you might imagine, you simply need to right-click a preset and choose Add to Favorites, which adds it to that preset group.

You can remove a preset from being a favorite in the same manner. Note, presets marked as favorites will also be available in the Favorites preset group found in the Quick Develop panel and the Import window.

Favorite Profiles

The last thing I can think of that has risen to the level of being favorited are profiles. No hidden right-click involved for this one though. Simply open the Profile Browser in the Basic panel, then as you move your cursor over a profile you will see a little star icon. Clicking that icon adds the profile to your list of favorite profiles, which appears in the Profile drop-down menu and saves you from having to open the entire Profile Browser each time.

Customize Develop Panel

Back in the December 2018 update a new functionality was added to the panels in the Develop module, and I've been wondering how many people have taken advantage of this new feature? I admit to being so used to/comfortable with the default order that I've not made any change that I felt that strongly about.

How does it work? Well, if you right-click any panel header on the right side of the Develop module (below the Histogram) you'll see a contextual menu with Customize Develop Panel at the top.

Click that to open the Customize Develop Panel dialog box, where you can change the vertical order of the panels on the right side. You can also uncheck the box next to any panel to hide that panel from view (though we've always been able to hide panels).

Just click and drag the panels up and down to create any order that suits your workflow. The best I've come up with is sorting them from most frequently accessed to least (by me) from top to bottom. I can't say as it has revolutionized my workflow, but I guess it makes a more logical workflow to me.
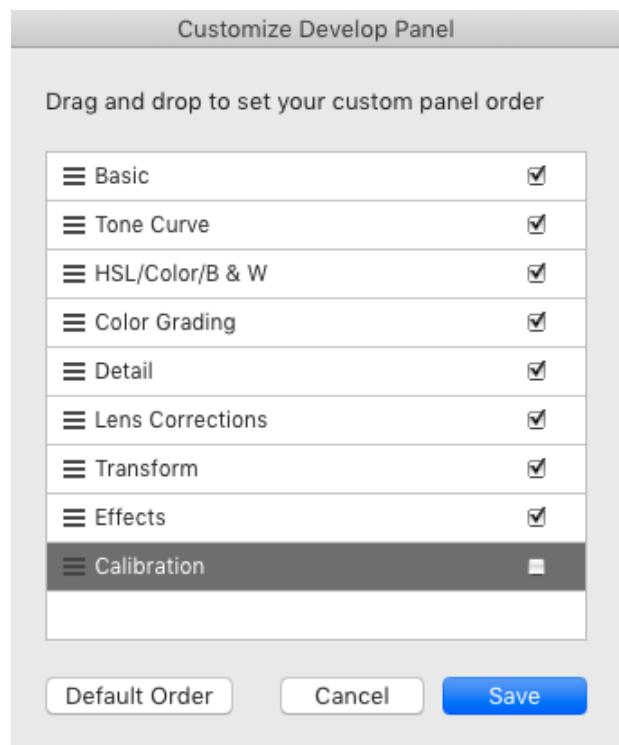
Once you've arranged the panels to your liking, click the Save button at the bottom. You'll be prompted to re-launch Lightroom for the change to take effect (or re-launch later if you are not ready to quit just yet).

If you ever change your mind, just right-click one of the panel headers again and open the dialog back up. At the bottom is the Default Order button that will put the panels back to the way they were before.

I've been using Solo mode (also accessible via right-clicking a panel header) for years, which means I usually only have one panel open at a time, so it just wasn't too much of a hardship to reach a little further for the desired panel.

Consistent Output

You've brought your photos into LrC's care, you've processed them with your consistent style, and now you're ready to send them out into the world. You can save yourself time here too by creating custom export presets that allow you to consistently reproduce the same results during output. Like me, you probably export copies for a wide variety of reasons, but there are probably some core destinations that you re-visit frequently, such as a regular client, an online lab, a stock agency, some photo sharing site, your blog, etc. In each of these cases the photos will vary, but the specifications the photos need to meet for each situation will stay the same. It is these cases that will benefit greatly from export presets. For example, when I export copies destined for Stocksy United, a stock photography co-op I belong to, I have an export preset that controls every parameter so I know that each submission is consistent with the previous ones. Here's how to create your own:

Step One: Select the photos for export and click the Export button.

Step Two: Configure the Export dialog to contain only the settings needed for this specific output destination.

Step Three: Click the Add button under the preset window to open the New Preset dialog box and give it a meaningful name. Optional: Store the preset in a folder for better organization of your presets.

The best thing about creating export presets is that once you have them you can skip the Export dialog completely simply by going to the File > Export with Preset menu and selecting your desired preset. LrC does the rest just the way you configured it (While in that menu, note the export with previous shortcut if you do lot's of similar exports without changing settings).

Extending the Power of Lr Classic Export

Output is such a huge part of LrC that it has four separate modules—Book, Slideshow, Print, and Web—entirely devoted to getting photos out in one form or another, then there are a number of publish service options, and finally there is the tried and true Export dialog. The Export dialog is the real unsung hero of LrC, and it is probably one of the functions you use the most. As powerful as the Export dialog is, you can expand its capabilities even further, and make your workflow more efficient than it is now. As an example, I want to share one of the ways I've upgraded my exports through the use of third-party export plug-ins that I rely on all of the time.

Lightroom Plug-in Manager

All export plug-ins are installed through the same process and can be managed through the Lightroom Plug-in Manager. Let's walk through the basics of where you can find these plug-ins, how to install them, how to remove them, and then how you can use one of them. To find the Plug-in Manager go to File > Plug-in Manager (or click the Plug-in Manager button on the Export dialog).
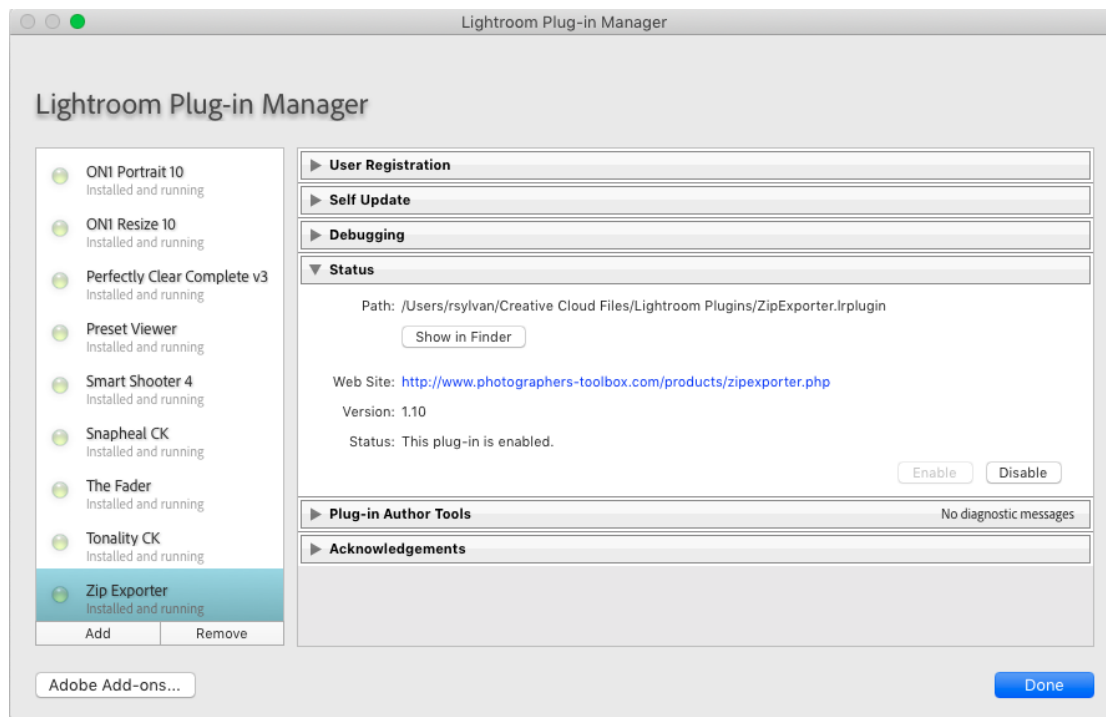
You should see that you've already got a few plug-ins installed that come packaged with LrC. At the bottom left of the Plug-in Manager is a button that will take you to the Adobe Add-ons website, where you can try (and buy) many different types of add-ons for LrC (and other Adobe products). There are some useful ones there to check out, but my favorite plug-ins can all be found over at the Photographer's Toolbox. No matter where you get your plug-in, here are the steps for installation:

STEP ONE: Download the file to your computer and unzip to access the plug-in file, which will have a .lrplugin file extension.

STEP TWO: Place a copy of that .lrplugin file in a folder of your choosing. I store mine in a folder located within my Creative Cloud files, but simply choose a location that makes sense for you.

STEP THREE: Click the Add button on the Plug-in Manager and select the .lrplugin file you placed in that folder. Click the Add Plug-in button add it to the manager.

Many plug-ins have a free trial version available (or are just free) and the full version often only requires a donation. After adding the plug-in to the manager you will see if it has any special configuration requirements or a place to add the serial number for the full version. On the left you'll see a green light next to the plug-in's name that indicates it is installed and running. That's all there is to it. To remove a plug-in added in this way just click the Remove button in the Plug-in Manager. Removing from the manager doesn't delete the .lrplugin file from your computer, so you'd need to do that manually outside of Lightroom.

Making Exports Zippy

Here's an example of why I think export plug-ins can be useful. I deliver files in compressed zip format all the time. It is such an easy and universally useable format for sending a files in a neat package that it has become habit for me. There's a cool plug-in on the Photographer's Toolbox called Zip Exporter that compresses your exported photos into a zip file right from the Export dialog (includes a free trial mode). You can even (optionally) configure the plug-in to upload that zip file to an FTP server as part of the process. The most common way I use it is to export the zip file to a folder in my Dropbox folder, and then I can easily send a link to that zip file via an email.

Start by selecting the photos, then click the Export button. On the Export dialog, choose Zip Exporter from the Export To drop-down menu to access the panels for this plug-in. The only new panel provided by this plug-in is the one on the top named Zip Exporter, and it is here where you choose the location for this zip file to be created. I chose a folder in my Dropbox folder, but it is entirely up to you. Once you've chosen the location all you need to do is enter a name for the zip file itself before configuring the remaining panels based on your export needs for file type, size, color space, etc. like you would for any export. Once configured the way you want it, I highly recommend that you click the Add button under the preset window to save those settings as an Export Preset, which is a huge timesaver for any repetitive type of export you may have.

Go further with Export Presets:

Save Time with Export Presets - Lightroom Killer Tips
https://lightroomkillertips.com/save-time-with-export-presets/

Batch Export Copies in Lightroom Classic - Lightroom Killer Tips
https://lightroomkillertips.com/batch-export-copies-in-lightroom-classic/

In Closing

As you can see, from import to export, and everything in between, there are opportunities to leverage LrC's presets, templates, and customizations to help you work smarter every step of the way.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me with any questions. You can find me at any of the following locations:

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