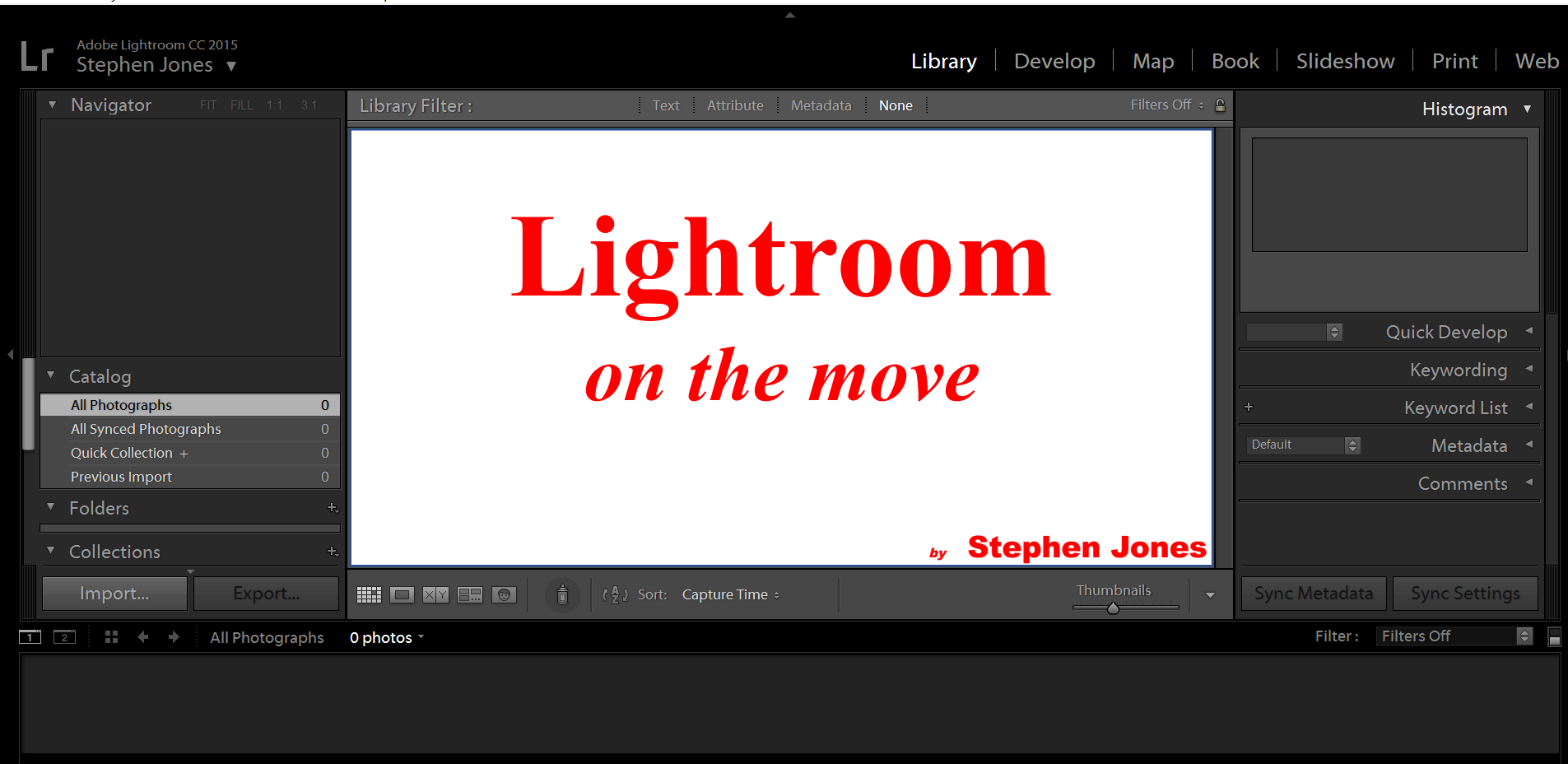Photography Group

Lightroom
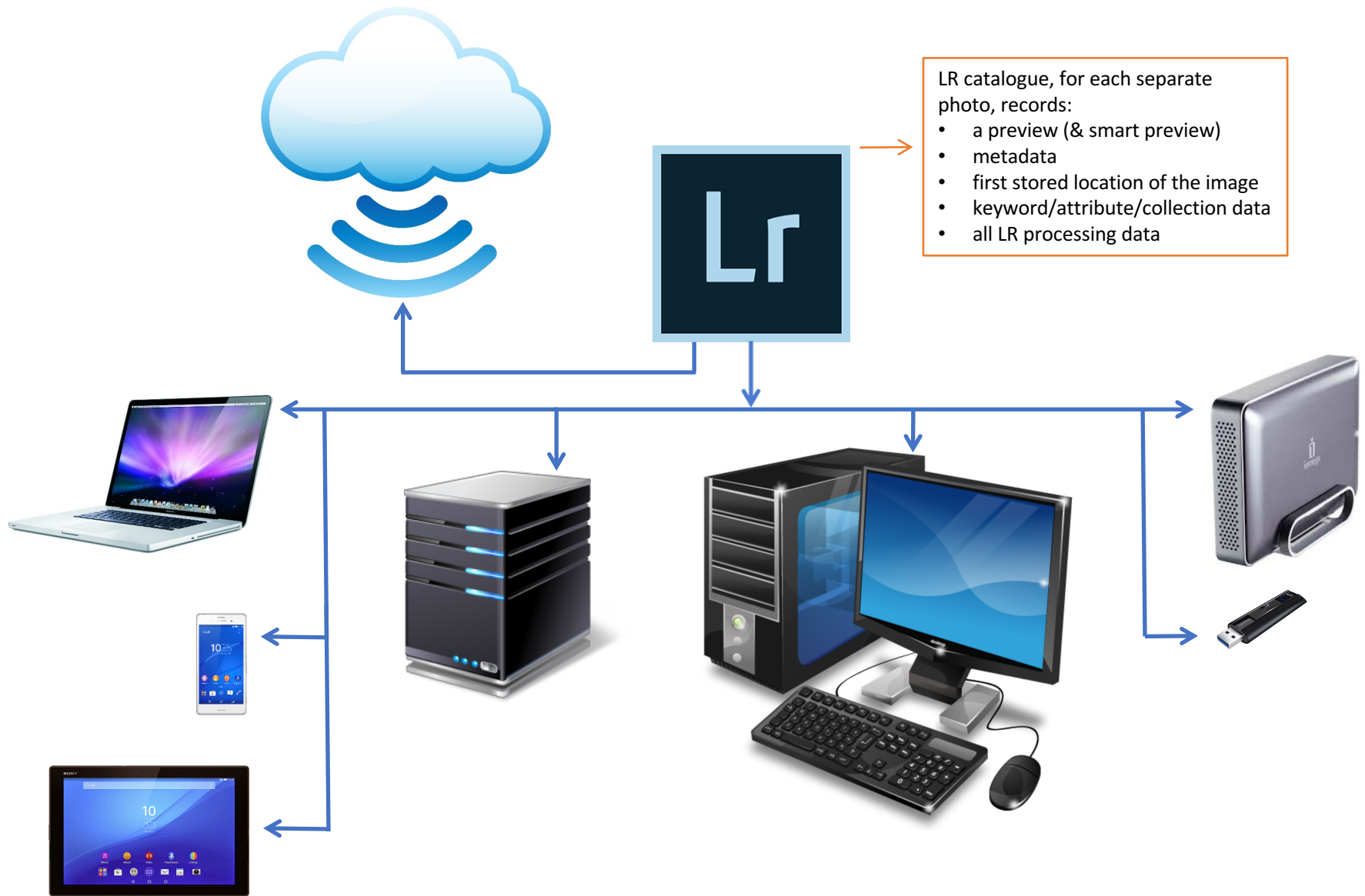
on the move

by **Stephen Jones**

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- If you are using the Creative Cloud subscription which provides you with both Photoshop and Lightroom, you can install the software on any number of devices, but you are allowed to operate the software on only two devices at any one time.

- If you have bought a one-off Lightroom (single licence), you are allowed use the software only on one device at a time, although you are allowed to install it on two devices.

NB. The above is my understanding of the terms of Adobe's software licences – if you use LR or CC, you should verify yourself that your own use complies with Adobe's licence.

LR catalogue, for each separate photo, records:
- a preview (& smart preview)
- metadata
- first stored location of the image
- keyword/attribute/collection data
- all LR processing data

Why use Lightroom when away from home ?

➢ Catalogue and/or process photos taken while away

This is why I use LR on my laptop – principally to add relevant keywords and titles/captions to my photos, recording the places, people or events, etc. while the photographing is still fresh in my mind sometimes I will also carry out some basic developing.

➢ Update and/or process photos in your main LR catalogue

You may be able to use spare time while away to update existing photos or do house-keeping style jobs to your main LR catalogue.

NB. Unless you have the original photo file with you, the only way to do any Develop Module processing is if you first make "smart previews" of the files you may wish to process.

➢ Use LR for "tethered" shooting

Typically for use in studio shoots, tethered shooting allows you to see the photo you've just taken on a larger screen so you can better check variables such as exposure, colour temperature, focus, composition and so on.

How best to go about integrating photos processed on the move with your main catalogue ?

By far the easiest way is to take all your master photos and LR catalogue with you.

You can buy a small 2 ½", USB3, 1 TB external drive for less than £50, £80 for 2 TB or a 3 ½" 4 TB drive for about £130 and so you can keep your LR catalogue and all photos on the external drive.

Like this, you have no integration problems at all –you import your photos immediately into your normal photo storage folders and all cataloguing and processing is carried out within your normal LR catalogue .

Apart from the cost of the drive and the extra bulk to carry, the main disadvantage is the relatively slow read/write speed of an external drive.

How best to go about integrating photos processed on the move with your main catalogue ?

For each of the following four main options as to how to import photos catalogued and/or processed on the move with your main LR catalogue at home, you will still have to copy or move the actual photo files from your mobile device to the folder in your main computer/storage where you want to permanently store your photos and then link them (use the "missing photos" instruction in the library tab) to your main LR catalogue.

How to incorporate photos processed on the move with your main catalogue at home ?

Option 1:

When you add Library data or make Develop changes in LR, these are stored in the LR Catalog file, but you can also write the changes to the photo file's own sidecar file.

This is what I do. Then, when I get home, I move the photos to my main home computer/storage and just linking the photos with my main LR catalogue will automatically register the changes in my main LR catalogue.

To write metadata changes to the sidecar file, in Library Module, from the "Metadata" menu tab, click on "Save metadata to file".

Note:
Virtual photos cannot be transferred using this method.

Going back to my earlier analogy of LR functioning like an old-fashioned library card file recording books in the library, Option 1 is like having an additional note of the card file's individual book record being pasted in each individual book. In Option 1, then, not only do you have the LR Catalogue file recording the individual photo, but the individual photo stores it's own updated record as well.

How to incorporate photos processed on the move with your main catalogue at home ?

Option 2:

Take your main LR catalogue files with you in a cloud app such as OneDrive.

I used to use OneDrive to run my main LR catalogue from my laptop, but because it gobbled up all the bandwidth whilst updating, I got into a terrible mess with it, so have abandoned this method (for the time being).

A variation of the above is to take your LR catalogue files with you on a USB stick but note that read/write speed of the USB stick will be slower than if the catalogue were in your device's memory.

How to incorporate photos processed on the move with your main catalogue at home ?

Option 3:

Create a "Smart Preview" for each of your photos.

The smart preview will automatically carry all sidecar data and more and so when you've moved the photos to your main home computer/storage, just linking the files with your main LR catalogue will automatically register the changes in your main LR catalogue.

Note:
1. Smart previews will also record virtual photos.
2. Smart previews take up a lot of additional disc space.

How to incorporate photos processed on the move with your main catalogue at home ?

Option 4:
Use the "Export Catalog" command in LR on your mobile device to write a new file which you can then transfer to your main computer. Then use the "Import Catalog" from your main LR catalogue to incorporate into your catalogue all photos from your mobile device.

In the "Export Catalog" command, you can choose to export the catalogue only, or you can export the catalogue with the photos themselves.