

Digital Workflow

Image Management

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Part 2 in the series on Digital Workflow. Part 1, Digital Darkroom.

Labeling & Filing Your Images

If you have been a photographer for any period of time, you probably have your own labeling & filing system set up. However, there are many people whose naming/labeling system consists of the file name and number assigned by the camera. This might work if you only have a few images. But, what if you have thousands of images and you're trying to find one specific photo?

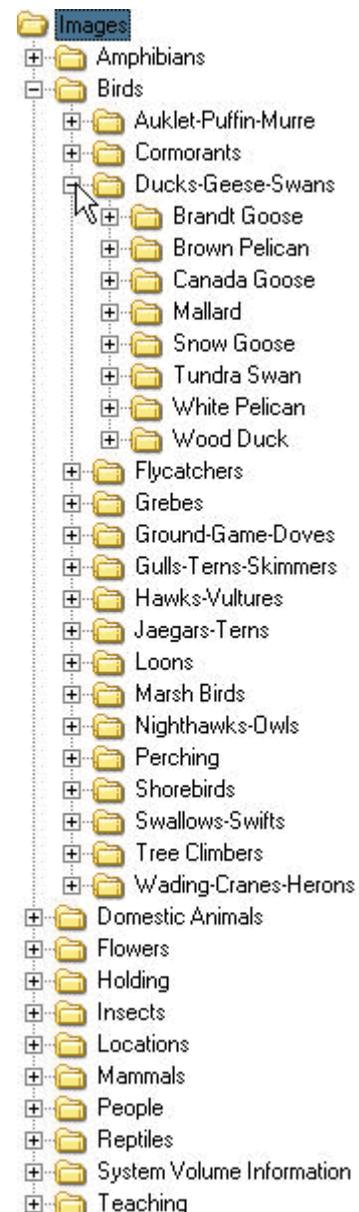
You will find that when you first get your digital camera, if you start off with a simple labeling & filing system, you won't find yourself going through that "shoe box full of old photos" a year or two later wondering "Where did I take this photo?" or "Who the heck is that?"

When I first started working with personal computers over twenty years ago, I learned that it's easier if you picture the computer's hard drive as a filing cabinet. Each drawer in the filing cabinet is a directory. Setting up a labeling and filing system is built upon this same analogy. Each "drawer" (directory) in my "filing cabinet" (hard drive) is labeled with a main category - Birds, Mammals, Locations, etc. Each of these main categories are divided into sub-categories - Ducks-Geese-Swans. The sub-categories are further divided into species.

My labeling system is based, in part, on the way a typical birder's guide books is set up. For instance, my code for the Wood Duck is BDP-WD followed by a sequential number, which the computer program (DigitalPro) assigns.

BDP-WD = BirdDuckPerching-WD = Wood Duck

I recommend you use this for all of your images, even family photos. PFC02-0001 could be People>Family>Christmas>2002, with -0001 being the sequential number of that particular image. Vacations?



PFV02. Your labeling and filing system can be as simple or as detailed as you want. A little fore-thought and preparation will save you a lot of time in the long run.

Image Management

For those of you who still shoot conventional film, Norton's NSCS Pro is ideal for numbering & labeling your slides. NSCS Pro offers one of the best labeling systems around. You can enter as many keywords as you'd like for each image. Thumbnail images may also be attached. NSCS Pro also comes with client management and submission tracking.

For those of you who do a lot of freelance work, Cradoc's released fotoBiz is well worth looking into. fotoBiz comes with fotoQuote built-in. fotoQuote can be a life-saver at times when you're not sure of how much to ask for a particular image. This is a very nice complete package.

When it comes to managing digital images, DigitalPro is by far the best image management system available for photographers. We use DigitalPro not just for editing, labeling and filing our images, but also for submitting our images. It is one complete package for the digital photographer, professional and amateur alike.

ACD See, FotoStation, ThumbsPlus & CompuPic Pro are a few of other image management programs available. Each of these programs have slightly different features. Their "viewers" provide you with the tools you need to quickly sort, edit and label your images.

DigitalPro Tutorial

Moose Peterson provides several great tutorials on his web site explaining how to set up and use DigitalPro as well as how he uses DigitalPro to manage and submit his images for publication.

Backup

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of backing up your image files every time you add new images. You should backup your business files - submissions, business contacts, business records, web sites, correspondence, you name it - on a daily basis. If something happens to that data, everything is gone. Just the thought of a disaster like that makes me physically ill. I cannot stress the importance of backing up your image and data files on a regular basis. You should have at least two backups. Make sure you verify the backup at well.

It is a good idea to have one backup at a different physical location. In other words, if you work outside your home, take one of the backups to work with

you. You could also place a copy in your safe-deposit box at the bank. A fire-proof safe in the same location really won't do you any good.

There are some online backup services that might be worth looking into as well.

Please note - I have not personally used any of these services, so I can not make any recommendations or guarantee their validity.

- Backup USA - <http://www.backupusa.com/Services&Rates-BUSA.htm>
- Connected - <http://www.connected.com/products/index.htm>
- NovaStor - <http://services.online-backup.com/index.asp>

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