

## Lightroom -

### How to move a file repository to another location

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The question of how to move the set of files Lightroom is working with from one hard drive volume to another comes up quite frequently. Here's an efficient way to do it for a large volume of files, or the entire set of files.

Note that you can move files from one location to another from within Lightroom, but there do seem to be frequent problems with this operation when you are trying to move a very large number of files. I find it better to use both Lightroom and the operating system's file management to do this when working with hundreds to thousands of files at a time ... it proves more robust and more efficient.

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#### *Preliminary information:*

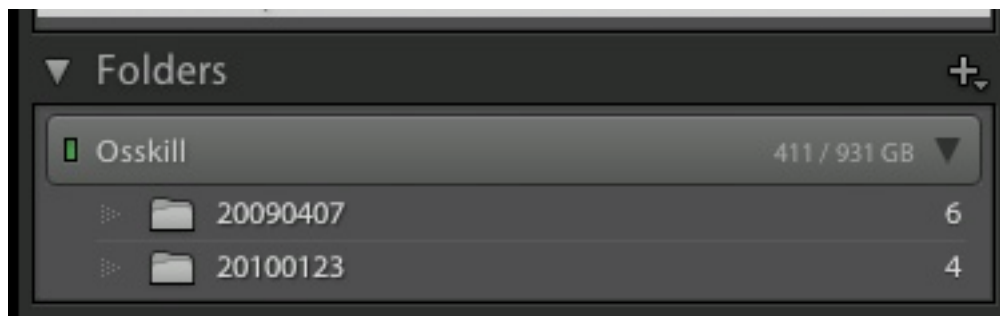
- The Lightroom *Library* module is the portion of LR intended for file browsing, finding, and metadata editing. The *Folder* panel in the LR Library module's left hand panel shows the directory trees (aka *folders*) that have imported into the Lightroom catalog on a volume by volume basis. I call this collection of image files the *file repository*.
- Volumes can be logical (a partition of a physical drive) or represent a whole physical drive. The *Folder* view is a one-to-one view of the actual directory structure on your computer for the images that Lightroom knows about (aka "*that have been imported*"), simplified by default so you don't have to see the entire file system hierarchy

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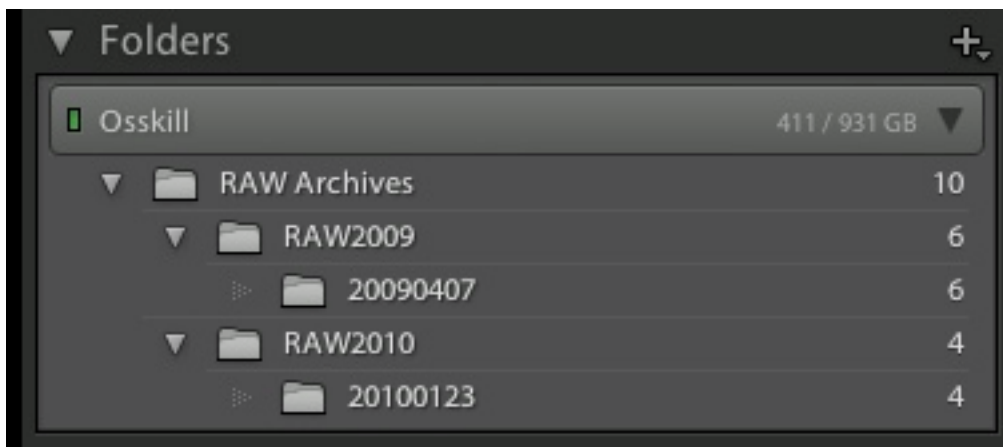
#### *The procedure for moving the file repository:*

To move a large collection of files to another location, I've found this to be the most efficient way to do it:

1. Start Lightroom, go to the *Library* module, select *Grid* view.
2. [*optional \**] Select the "All Photographs" entry in the Catalog panel. Select all in the Grid View. Elect the "Metadata->Save Metadata to File" command. [*\* - this is an optional step ... you don't really have to do it. What it does is write out all the current adjustments and metadata additions you've made to the files to disk as an extra precaution. It makes no difference to the actual file movement itself.*]
3. Go to the *Folders* panel and use the control/right-click command on folders to **Include Parent Folder** until you obtain the *root folder* under which all your photos on the present drive are included. eg: this original set of two folders imported ...



becomes this after I *Include Parent Folder* a couple of times



**"RAW Archives"** is the *root folder* in this instance.

4. Quit Lightroom.
5. Using the Mac OS X Finder or Windows Explorer, move the files' directory tree to the new destination by dragging the *root folder* there. This is by default a copy operation so it will take some time if you have a lot of files. (EG: In the example shown, you'd drag the "**RAW Archives**" folder to the destination location.)
6. Open Lightroom again. Control/Right-click on the *root folder* and use the **Find Missing Directory** command. Navigate to the *root folder* in the new location and select it. LR will update the *root folder* and all relative paths underneath it.

Once you've done that, you can delete the original *root folder* from the old location ... Lightroom is now looking at the files in their new location on whatever volume you copied them to.

If you're unsure of any part of this procedure, I would recommend creating a new LR catalog and making a subset collection of files in a separate directory tree to practice with first before disrupting your main working catalog and file repository.

Oh yes ... And remember:

\*\*  
***ALWAYS have a backup before you  
make major changes to a large  
catalog and file repository.***  
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It will potentially save you a lot of grief! :-)