

Photo Mechanic 101

YouTube Webinar Notes

What is Photo Mechanic?

Photo Mechanic is a tool for viewing and managing batches of photos - adding metadata, renaming, moving, and uploading. It is not a pixel editor for post-processing or a raw renderer.

Typical Uses

1. Copy images from your memory card to your computer and then review them quickly
2. Add metadata like captions, keywords, and copyright information in batches
3. Rename and organize extensive collections of photos

How to Get it?

There is a free 30-day trial of Photo Mechanic available with no credit card required.

<https://store.camerabits.com/try-photo-mechanic-for-free>

The Interface

Contact Sheet

This is the main working area of Photo Mechanic displays thumbnails of images in a folder

- Change the size of thumbnails with the slider
- Change sort with dropdown

More documentation on the Contact Sheet:

<https://docs.camerabits.com/support/solutions/articles/48000207551-contact-sheets-an-overview>

Navigator

Directory of your computer's main drive. You can view the contents of any folder by double-clicking on it. Photos are not "imported" into Photo Mechanic. You view and edit them where they already exist.

Preview Window

Double-clicking on an image in the Contact Sheet opens the Preview Window.

Here are some useful keyboard shortcuts you can use while in the Preview Window

	macOS	Windows
Toggle zoom on/off	z	z
Set Color Class	Cmd - 1 thru 8	Ctrl - 1 thru 8
Set Rating	Ctrl - 1 thru 5	Alt - 1 thru 5
View/Edit metadata	i	i
Edit in default editor	e	e

More documentation about the Preview Window:

<https://docs.camerabits.com/support/solutions/articles/48001144384-the-preview-window>

All keyboard shortcuts:

<https://docs.camerabits.com/support/solutions/folders/48000228176>

IPTC Metadata Info

This window is where you can view or edit the single image's metadata

More documentation on Metadata (IPTC) Info:

<https://docs.camerabits.com/support/solutions/articles/48000341504-using-the-metadata-info-tool-iptc->

IPTC Metadata Template

This window is where you can add metadata to multiple images in a batch

More documentation on Metadata (IPTC) Template:

<https://docs.camerabits.com/support/solutions/articles/48000207623-using-the-metadata-iptc-template>

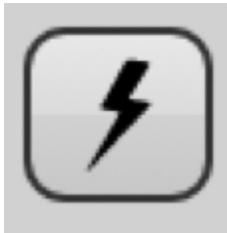
Preferences

	macOS	Windows
Open Preferences/Settings	Cmd - , (comma)	Ctrl - , (comma)

Help Articles on various Preferences sections:

<https://docs.camerabits.com/support/search?term=Preferences>

Snapshot Presets



Learning how to create and use Snapshot presets is one of the most effective ways to save time in Photo Mechanic. Wherever you see the Snapshot icon on any tool or settings dialog, you can save the information and configuration as a preset to be able to use later.

Tip: In the XMP/IPTC Preferences screen, there are built-in presets to configure the way Photo Mechanic stores metadata. You can choose presets to make Photo Mechanic work best with Adobe products, Capture One, or Apple Aperture.

More info on using Snapshots:

<https://docs.camerabits.com/support/solutions/articles/48001142336-snapshots>

Setting single key shortcuts

While you can always use the full keyboard shortcuts to set Color Class or Star Ratings either in the Contact Sheet or Preview windows, you can also set the single number keys as a shortcut for either Star Ratings or Color Class. This is under Preferences > Accessibility

Single Key Shortcuts

Single key shortcut for Color Class or 5-Star Rating:

- 0-8 sets Color Class
- 0-5 sets Rating

Ingesting Images

The process of copying images from a memory card to your computer is called Ingesting. *It is highly recommended to Ingest images from the memory card to your computer first before adding ratings or editing metadata.*

Keyboard shortcut to open the Ingest dialog

	macOS	Windows
Open Preferences/Settings	Cmd - g	Ctrl - g

More documentation on Ingesting Images:

<https://docs.camerabits.com/support/solutions/articles/48000207409-ingesting-photos>

Using Variables

Another key topic to familiarize yourself with to get fast at Photo Mechanic is the use of Variables – shorthand strings that evaluate (convert) to different values depending on metadata that is already in the image. Variables are always in {curly} brackets.

For example: If you insert {iso} into either of the Metadata screens or filenaming dialogs, Photo Mechanic will look up the ISO in that specific image's EXIF data and replace {iso} with that number. So if you apply a Metadata (IPTC) Template to an entire folder of images with {iso} in the keywords field, it will give each image a keyword equal to the ISO without you having to change it separately for each image.

Another example: In the Copy/Move dialog. If you have a folder of images with color classes and move them into a destination with the {color} variable as the folder name, Photo Mechanic will automatically put the images into separate folders based on their color class

More documentation on using Variables in Photo Mechanic:

<https://docs.camerabits.com/support/solutions/articles/48000207639-introduction-to-variables-in-photo-mechanic>

Some other popular Variables in Photo Mechanic:

{color}	Color Class of the image
{stars}	Star Rating of the image
{datesort}	Capture date of photo according to camera or file creation time. This can be used for sorting since the format is always YYYYMMDD
{photog}	This will insert the name of wherever is in the Photographer field. Useful for captions or filenaming.

You can see a full list of the variables by clicking the “Variables...” button in any Photo Mechanic dialog, and they are also all described here:

<https://docs.camerabits.com/support/solutions/articles/48000358438>