

ADOBE

The Lightroom Ecosystem

How Lightroom Classic, Lightroom, Lightroom Mobile
& Photoshop work together

Lincoln Camera Club · September 9, 2026

What Is the Adobe Ecosystem?

A family of photo editing & management tools that work seamlessly across your devices — phone, tablet, desktop.

Lightroom Classic

A comprehensive desktop-based photo editing and management software



Lightroom

Cloud-based desktop & web app



Lightroom Mobile

Editing app for smart phones and tablets allowing you to edit on-the-go



Photoshop

A powerhouse for image editing, retouching and digital creation



All four share the same Adobe Creative Cloud — edits, presets, and photos can be set to sync automatically.

Lightroom Classic

*The Desktop
Powerhouse*



LOCAL LIBRARY

All photos stored on YOUR hard drive — you own the files.

POWERFUL TOOLS

Full Develop module, advanced masks, noise reduction, healing, lens corrections.

ORGANIZATION

Collections, keywords, star ratings, color labels, smart folders.

WHO IT'S FOR

Those who want full control of their photos & no cloud dependency.

Key Facts

Mac & Windows

Desktop only. No mobile version

Files stay local

You choose exactly where photos live on disk

Non-destructive

Original RAW files are never altered

Export to PS

One click to Photoshop for advanced retouching

Optional sync

Can sync select photos to Lightroom Mobile via cloud

Preset sharing

Presets sync to mobile via Creative Cloud

Lightroom (Cloud)

*Cloud-First,
Every Device*



CLOUD LIBRARY

Photos live in Adobe's cloud. Accessible from any device, anywhere.

SEAMLESS SYNC

Edit on your desktop, continue on your phone or tablet and the changes follow you.

SIMPLIFIED UI

Cleaner, modern interface compared to Classic. Great for beginners.

WHO IT'S FOR

Photographers who want photos everywhere without managing hard drives.

Key Facts

Mac, Windows, Web

Same app experience across platforms

Cloud storage required

Photos upload to Adobe cloud automatically

Edit tools virtually identical

Same sliders & AI tools as Lightroom Classic

Web access

lightroom.adobe.com — edit in any browser

Share & collaborate

Generate shareable galleries with a link

Works with Classic

You can run both — they share the cloud — you choose which photos to include

Lightroom Mobile

*Edit on iPhone
& iPad*



FULL EDITING

Virtually all the same tools as desktop such as curves, masking, healing, etc.

CAPTURE MODULE

Option to use the Pro-level camera app with manual controls. Shoots DNG (RAW) directly.

AI TOOLS

Denoise, Remove Background, Select Subject, Select Sky, all on mobile.

AUTO SYNC

Photos & edits sync instantly with desktop when on Wi-Fi.

Key Facts

Free to download

App is free...however, many features do require a subscription

iOS & Android

Available on iPhone, iPad, and Android devices

Presets on mobile

Your desktop presets sync here automatically

Offline editing

Works without internet; then syncs to cloud when you are connected

Import from camera

Connect via USB or wireless card reader or even direct access to your camera roll

Share direct

Post to social media or export at custom sizes

Photoshop & Photoshop Mobile



A powerhouse for image editing, retouching and digital creation

Photoshop (Desktop)

- Layer-based editing — multiple exposures, text, graphics.
- Advanced masking, selections & retouching beyond the Lightroom options.
- Generative AI fill — expand images or replace objects with AI.
- Smart Objects — keep edits non-destructive.
- Can round-trip with Lightroom — Edit In Photoshop, save back.
- Steep learning curve; most LR users rarely need it.

Photoshop Mobile (iPhone/iPad)

- Free app — surprisingly capable on touch devices.
- Object selection, healing, and basic layer support.
- Remove Background — tap and it's done.
- Neural filters for portraits: smooth skin, colorize.
- Open/save PSD files — compatible with desktop.
- More limited than desktop; great for quick fixes.

How They Connect



Presets, edits, and cloud photos all sync automatically — start on one device, pick up where you left off on another device.

Pricing & Plans

FREE

Lightroom Mobile app · Basic editing · 5 GB cloud storage · Web access at lightroom.adobe.com

Lightroom Plan

\$11.99 / mo

- Lightroom (cloud) desktop & mobile
- 1 TB cloud storage
- Lightroom Mobile (full features)
- Web access & sharing

Does NOT include Lightroom Classic or Photoshop

Photography Plan

\$19.99 / mo**

- Lightroom Classic (desktop)
- Lightroom (cloud) + Mobile
- Photoshop desktop & phone/tablet
- 1 TB cloud storage (upgradeable)
- Most popular for serious photographers

Creative Cloud All Apps

\$69.99 / mo

- Everything in Photography Plan
- Entire Adobe creative suite - 20+ apps
- Illustrator, Premiere, InDesign...
- 100 GB cloud storage
- Best if you use multiple Adobe apps

Prices shown as of September 2026 — visit adobe.com/plans for current pricing.

Lr Free vs. Paid — What You Actually Get

	FREE	PAID (any plan)
Lightroom Mobile app	✓ Import & very basic editing	✓ Full editing, presets, masking
Cloud storage	5 GB	1 TB (Lr plan)
Lightroom (desktop)	✗	✓ Full app
Lightroom Classic	✗	✓ Photography Plan only
Photoshop desktop	✗	✓ Photography Plan & up
Photoshop mobile	✓ Basic features	✓ Full feature set
AI Denoise / Masks	Mobile: limited	✓ Full AI tools everywhere
Preset sync	✗	✓ Syncs across all devices

Which App Should You Use?

You shoot lots of RAW files and want full control over organizing your library on your own hard drive

→ **Lightroom Classic**

You travel and want to edit on your laptop, tablet, or phone, and not concerned with organizing files

→ **Lightroom (Cloud) + Mobile**

You mostly shoot on your phone and do very light editing

→ **Lightroom Mobile (free tier may be enough!)**

You want to do composites, sky replacement, add text, work with layers, or do more graphic design work

→ **Photoshop (after editing in Lightroom)**

You want the full setup—file management, pro level editing capabilities, interoperability when on-the-go

→ **Photography Plan covers it all**

Getting Started

1

Start with the free mobile app

Download Lightroom Mobile for free. Explore the editing tools with no commitment. You get 5 GB of cloud storage included.

2

Try before you buy

Adobe offers a free 7-day trial of the Photography Plan, enough time to test Classic and Photoshop side by side.

3

You don't need both Classic AND Lightroom

Most photographers pick one. Classic if you want local file control; cloud Lightroom if you want everything in sync.

4

Photoshop is optional

90% of photographers can do everything in Lightroom. Add Photoshop only when you need compositing or complex retouching.

The Ecosystem Summary

Questions?

- **Lightroom Classic** — your library on your hard drive, maximum control
- **Lightroom (Cloud)** — sync everywhere, modern interface, great for travel
- **Lightroom Mobile** — free download, edit your phone photos like a pro
- **Photoshop** — bring in the big guns when you need layers & compositing
- **They all share one cloud** — presets, edits & photos move between them automatically