



Also check...

"The previews are slightly different between Library and Develop and Fit and 1:1 views—why is that?" on page 115

How can I speed up browsing in Develop module? And what are these Cache*.dat files?

We've mentioned before that there's a difference between the way that the Library and Develop modules display previews. Library shows you lower quality previews from the previews cache. Develop, on the other hand, assumes you need an accurate, rapidly changing view, so it first shows you the preview from the preview cache, then does a quick read of the raw file, and then finishes loading properly, before it turns off the 'Loading...' overlay. You don't have to wait for the overlay to disappear before starting work on the photo. If you find the overlay distracting, you can turn it off going to the View menu > View Options > Loupe tab and turning off the 'Show message when loading or rendering photos' checkbox.

Particularly with the size of camera sensors today, there's a lot of raw data to load and process each time you switch photos. Have you ever noticed, though, that when you adjust a photo in Develop module, move to other photos, and then come back to that first photo again, it loads much quicker than it did the first time? If you've only just viewed the photo, it may still be stored in RAM, but once it's disappeared from RAM, the Camera Raw cache, also known as the ACR cache, comes into its own.

When Lightroom reads the data the first time, it adds it into the shared Camera Raw cache in a partially processed state, with the initial demosaic and other background work already done. Those are the Cache*.dat files that you might see appearing. When you load a photo into the Develop module, it will first check that cache to see if the data is already there to reuse, which is much quicker than reading and processing the original raw file data.

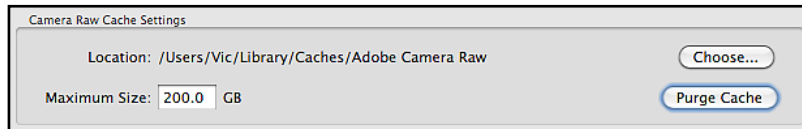
By default, that Camera Raw cache is only 1GB in size, and when new data gets added, the oldest data is removed. With only 1GB of space, that happens quite quickly, so you're not seeing the benefit if you're processing large raw files. If you go to Lightroom's Preferences > File



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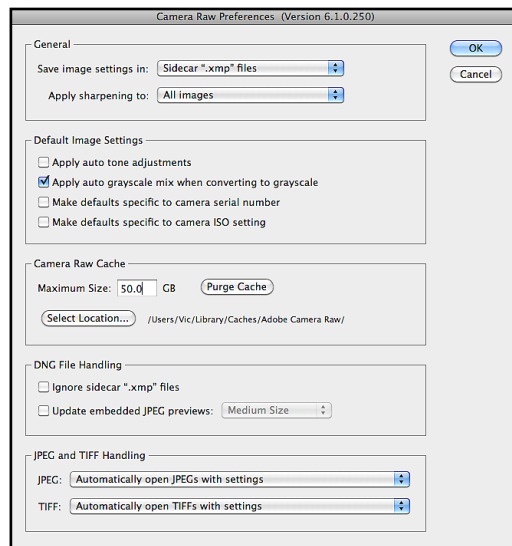
"The default location of the Camera Raw Cache is..." on page 464

Handling tab, you can change the cache size to suit—up to a maximum of 200GB. If you have spare hard drive space available, bigger is better! You can also change the location of that cache, but make sure it's on a fast hard drive. The Camera Raw cache settings that you change in Lightroom also apply to ACR in Bridge/Photoshop, and can also be changed in the ACR Preferences dialog.



Once that data is cached, it's much faster moving between photos in the Develop module—almost instantaneous on high end machines. Of course, that's only helpful when Lightroom has recently read the raw file, and added it to the cache, and there isn't currently a menu command to pre-load the Camera Raw cache. All is not lost!

There's a trick to pre-loading the Camera Raw cache. In addition to actually viewing the photo in the Develop module, there's another obvious time when Lightroom has to read, and therefore caches, the raw data—namely, when rendering previews. If you haven't already rendered previews for your photos, simply using the Library menu > Render Standard-Sized Previews command will also pre-load the photos into the Camera Raw cache. If, however, you already have current previews, you can force them to re-render by making a minor or reversible Develop adjustment



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to the photos (i.e., by using a Quick Develop button) and then using the Render Standard-Sized Previews menu command. Leave it to finish, and by the time you come back, even the Develop module should be moving through the photos at a much more comfortable speed.