

Why do my raw photos change color? When the first preview appears, it looks just like it did on the camera—how do I stop it changing?

A raw file isn't an image file like a JPEG or a TIFF. You can't look at it—there's nothing to see. You need some software to process it into a photo, and that software is called a raw converter. The initial preview you see in Lightroom is the JPEG preview embedded in the raw file by the camera. That JPEG preview has the manufacturer's own processing applied in-camera, just as if you would set your camera to shoot a JPEG rather than a raw file format.

The camera manufacturer's don't share their processing secrets, so each raw converter creates its own interpretation of the sensor's data. There is no right or wrong—it's just different. Lightroom builds its own preview to show you how it will process your photo using its current settings.

So how do you get your file in Lightroom to look like that original camera JPEG preview? One of the major benefits of shooting in your raw file format is that you can tweak the photo to your own taste, rather than being tied to the manufacturer's rendering, but Adobe listened to the user's cries and created a new profiling system which allows greater flexibility.

The DNG Profile Editor allows the creation of much more detailed profiles than have ever been available to ACR (Adobe Camera Raw) and Lightroom before. As well as being able to create your profiles, Adobe have created ready-made profiles to emulate the most popular in-camera JPEG rendering for many Pro-level SLR's. Although the name 'DNG Profiles' makes it sound like they're limited to DNG files, these profiles can actually be used on proprietary raw files too.

You'll find those profiles in the Profile pop-up menu in the Calibration panel, installed automatically with each Lightroom update, and you can add your own profiles too. If you find a profile that you'd prefer to use as a starting point for all of your photos, you can also set it as the default,



Also check...

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so that your newly imported photos automatically use that profile. Many choose to set 'Camera Standard' as their default profile, so that the initial preview is closer to the camera rendering. We'll come back to creating your own profiles and setting default settings later in the chapter.