

What happens if I'm still using an older version of ACR and Photoshop?

If you're using a mismatched version of ACR, it may not understand all of Lightroom 3's new settings, and therefore the rendering may be different. Besides the new camera support, there are a few other changes involved, depending on the version number. In recent years, there have been changes to the demosaic, new sliders added such as Grain, existing sliders redesigned resulting in the introduction of Process Versions, and now the new lens corrections too.

The demosaic, in basic terms, is the initial translation of the raw data into an image, which applies to all of the photos regardless of your Process Version setting. ACR 5.6 and earlier use an older demosaic, whereas Lightroom 3 and ACR 5.7 and higher all use the new demosaic. The visible difference is an increased amount of detail in the newer demosaic, which can affect the amount of sharpening and noise reduction you choose to apply. If you open a Lightroom 3 photo into a version of ACR with the old demosaic (5.6 or earlier), for example, opening a photo directly into CS3 with ACR 4.6, then it will appear softer and less detailed than Lightroom 3, even if you've used sliders that it understands.

There are also new sliders which older ACR versions may not understand, for example, Grain and the post-crop vignette Highlight Priority and Color Priority options, are understood by 5.7 but no earlier. The original post-crop vignette, local adjustments, and camera profiles are understood by 4.6 but no earlier.

Further down the line are the processing algorithms, including Fill Light, Noise Reduction and Sharpening, which have changed so significantly this time that they now come in 2 different versions – Process Versions 2003 and 2010, more often shortened to PV2003 and PV2010. We discussed those in more detail in the Develop chapter.

And of course, last but not least, there are the new lens corrections which require ACR 6.1 or later.



Also check...

"Process Versions" section on page 274 and "Can I open a raw file directly into the ACR dialog?" on page 363



Also check...

"Detail—Sharpening & Noise Reduction" section on page 314 and "Lens Corrections" section on page 319

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Here's a quick reference of the most recent ACR versions for each Photoshop release, and the differences you're likely to see if you leave ACR to process your files.

	Demosaic	PV2003	PV2010	New Sliders	Lens Correct
CS3 / 4.6	Mismatch	Close	Mismatch	Mismatch	Mismatch
CS4 / 5.7	Match	Close	Close (no UI)	Close (no UI)	Mismatch
CS5 / 6.1	Match	Match	Match	Match	Match

There's an additional dialog which often appears when the ACR version is mismatched, offering you the choice of 'Render Using Lightroom' or 'Open Anyway'.

