KEYWORDING EXTRAS

KEYWORD SHORTCUTTING AND THE PAINTER TOOL

Truth be told, images we want to add specific keywords to aren’t always organized in a perfect sequence. In fact, we may often want to apply a keyword to photos that are scattered all over the place, and hunting and pecking around to select those photos can be time consuming. Keyword Shortcuts and the Painter Tool can both help us with quickly applying keywords to such scattered photos. You can set a keyword, or a set of keywords, as a shortcut, and will then be able to quickly apply those keywords to your images in one of two ways. You can select an image or a set of images and then use quick keys Shift-K to apply them, or you can use the Painter Tool to apply them.

There are a couple of ways to make a keyword a shortcut. You can go to Metadata Menu > Set Keyword Shortcut, and then type your keywords into the Keyword Shortcut text box as shown in Figure 1.1. If you then refer to your keyword in the Keyword List panel, it will be accompanied by a small (+) symbol (see Figure 1.2), which indicates that the keyword has been set as a shortcut.
1.1
To make a keyword or a set of Keyword Shortcuts, go to Metadata Menu > Set Keyword Shortcut, and then type in the keywords you want to make into Shortcuts. After, you can quickly apply these keywords by using the quick keys: Shift-K.

If you want to have an existing keyword be set as a shortcut, Right-Click (PC) or Control-Click (Mac) on the keyword in the Keyword List and then choose Use this as Keyword Shortcut—the same (+) symbol will appear next to the keyword. Even though the Keyword Shortcut is helpful, I usually prefer to use the Painter Tool to quickly apply a Keyword Shortcut. Besides adding keywording, the other great and cool thing about the Painter Tool is that it can apply all sorts of things to images that are scattered about. Things like color labels, flags, star ratings, developmental presets, metadata presets, or image rotating are all possible in addition to adding keywords.

1.2
Keywords with (+) symbols next to them are designated as Keyword Shortcuts

Here’s how it works. Click on the Paint Can found in the Toolbar as shown in Figure 1.3. If you type in the keywords you want to add to your photos, then those keywords will become Keyword Shortcuts, and you can apply them with the Spray Can instead of using quick keys. Therefore, as you type keywords into the text box for the Painter Tool, the same (+) symbol will appear next to the keywords in the Keyword List panel. And when it does, you can then move the Spray Can over your image thumbnails by clicking on individual images, or clicking and dragging the can over a row of images to apply the keywords—it’s as simple as that. I love this tool. It’s so much easier than selecting a set and then adding a keyword, then selecting another set and then adding the same keyword again.

TIP: In the event you click on the wrong image with the spray can, removing an incorrectly added keyword is just as easy. If you hold down the Alt (or Option key) the spray can turns into an eraser. Just keep the Alt or Option key pressed and click on the image or click and drag across the images you wish to remove the keyword from.

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EXPORTING KEYWORD LISTS

You can organize, edit, or share your keyword list and hierarchy outside of Lightroom. If you go to Metadata Menu > Export Keywords (see Figure 1.4), you can name and save your keyword list as a text file (.txt). You can then open it in your favorite text editor to add whatever keywords you like (see Figure 1.5).

Top-level keywords are separated from bottom-level keywords by using the Tab key, and for a multi-tiered hierarchy, just tap the Tab key multiple times. Once you’re finished editing your keyword list, you can save it and reimport it back into Lightroom by going back:

1.4
Go to Metadata Menu > Export Keywords to export your list of keywords.

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to the Metadata Menu and clicking on Import Keywords. All your new keywords and their containing keywords will be shown in the Keyword List panel.

Editing keywords outside of Lightroom is occasionally easier for photographers, but for some photographers working in multiuser environments, it’s essential. There are many pro photographers whose keywording systems are so time consuming or complex that they need to outsource the work to a third party or keywording service provider. Keywording.com, wordsforimages.com and keyindiaographics.com are just a few of the services that can keyword stock photos for photographers, but knowing how to export and import keyword lists is essential for this kind of workflow. Moreover, if you are just beginning to create a keywording system for a library you intend to share with a stock agency, be aware that stock agencies usually have keywording guidelines for you to consider. It might be a good idea to visit some agencies’ websites like Getty, Alamy, iStock, or a specific one that you may be interested in so you can start incorporating their suggestions into your workflow today.