

NOT JUST

Another Photoshop Book™

For version CS6 / CC



From the Camera to the Finished Image

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Preface

I am, at my core, a custom photographic printer. I was first dragged kicking and screaming into the digital age: Now, I embrace it with a passion.

I have been privileged over the last 29+ years to work in partnership with some of the world's finest photographers. I also have a knack for making superior color prints for these photographers, as well as many serious amateurs. I've now taken that expertise and applied it to the world of digital imaging education.



It's safe to say that I've learned a few things over the years...

- I don't plan to teach you how to put children's heads on animals, or make flashing and rotating text, or how to create a surreal, mind-blowing digital masterpiece that defies logic. There's a place for it, but that's not my "gig",
- **What I can teach you is how to make a great color print using the basics of Photoshop to achieve your desired printed results.**
- So, the question is: Why should you listen to me? The same reason that you listen to your doctor: training and experience. Like your doctor, I've learned what generally works and what doesn't. Also, like your doctor, I'm constantly learning new things, and listening to new ideas (a doctor "practices" medicine, after all!) - Hence, this book.
- Although there's quite a bit of valuable information in this book, please keep in mind that this isn't a "complete" Photoshop encyclopedia – it's designed instead to get you up and running with a minimum of hassle, master the fundamentals of Photoshop, and get great results. Once you master the material in this book, you'll be able to expand your "Photoshop Horizons", knowing you're starting with a solid foundation.

One other thing: as you read through this book, you'll have questions – that's a given. I don't want to leave you hanging or confused, so call me at **800-443-9701** or e-mail me, john@wattsdigital.com, if you've got a question -- I'll be happy to answer it.

Okay, so let's get started ...

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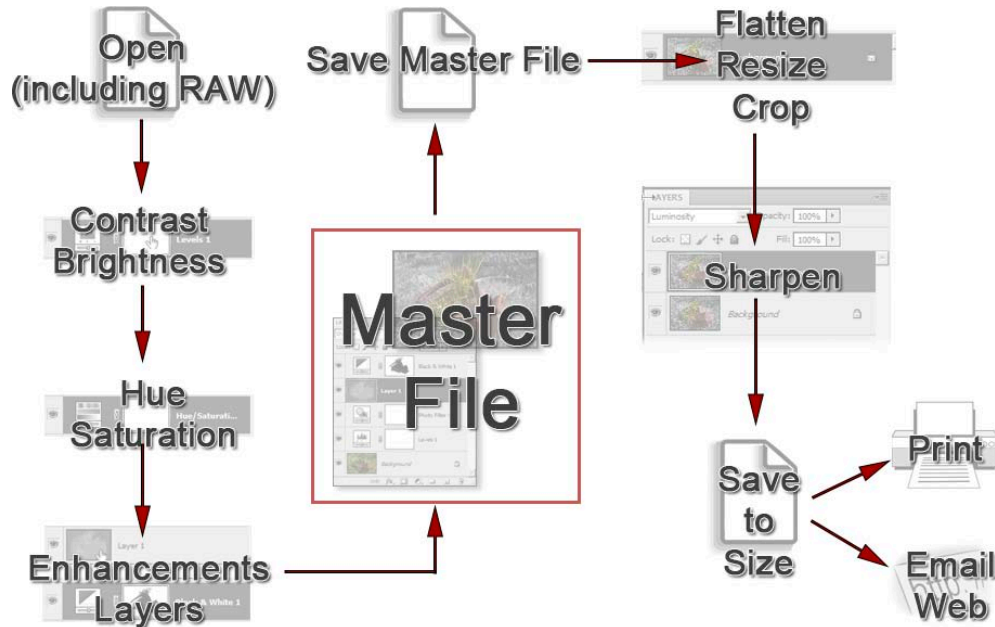
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Chapter 2 – The Master File and Workflow

If a picture is truly worth a thousand words, then here's an overall visual representation of the **Workflow Chart** on page “g” near the beginning of the book – notice that your Workflow centers on creating a **Master File**.



Creating a Master File is NOT for every image: it's for those images that you want to spend time with, doing all that's necessary to make your image “pretty”. Here's where you pour your artistic “blood, sweat and tears” into your image, using the methods shown in this book.

What is a “Master File”? It's a 16-Bit, un-flattened, un-sharpened, un-cropped, un-resized file designated as such in its file name, all of this discussed later in this book.

Why create a Master File?

- *It's Multi-purpose:* Use it to create separate files for a specific print size or printer, for the Web, for magazine output, etc. and you'll stay consistent between those files.
- *It's easily correctable:* for color, contrast, cropping, enhancements, etc. non-destructively (discussed later).
- *Sharpening is applied according to your print size:* Let's say that your Master File is created from a RAW file – It might be around 11"x16.5" at 300 ppi – If you sharpen for this size and reduce the file to prep for a 4x6 print, it will be over-sharpened.

By the way, **this book's arranged in a manner similar to the chart above: Sections 1 through 4 focus on the “left” side of the chart, and Sections 5 through 8 dig into the right side of the chart.**

Save your Master Files as TIFF files, not JPG files:

It is important to save your Master Files as TIFF's, not as JPG's. Again, just to reiterate from Chapter 1, there are three reasons:

- Every time that you open, work on, and save a JPG, there is degradation because the JPG compression scheme is not "lossless" - a TIFF is "lossless"
- You cannot save a JPG in 16 Bit
- You cannot save a JPG with Layers

TIFF vs PSD:

For all practical purposes, there is no difference between the **TIFF format** and the **PSD format**. My personal preference is TIFF, for two reasons:

1. A TIFF file is recognized in more programs and operating systems than a PSD.
2. Most professional photo printing services need a TIFF file in order for their specialized software (Printer "RIP's") to work properly.

That being said, there are two related situations in which you might want to save your Master File as a .PSD rather than a .TIFF –

1. Your original file is large to begin with (over 200 MB)
2. Your Master File becomes large (over 200 MB)

Examples:

- It's not unusual for me to work with 200 to 400 MB 16-bit Drum Scans from film transparencies, and a Master File with many layers can easily become 600 or 700 MB, which makes things very cumbersome and slows down my computer tremendously.
- If I'm working on a complicated RAW file that involves a lot of specialized layers, my Master File could get bigger than 200 MB, even though my original RAW was only 20 MB or so, again slowing down my computer.

By turning off the "Maximize Compatibility" in my "Preferences" and saving these files as a PSD, the file size remains the same size, or sometimes even a bit smaller.

To turn off "Maximize Compatibility" (Applies only to PSD's, not TIFF's):

- On a PC, go to the "Edit" Menu → "Preferences..." → "File Handling"
- On a Mac, go to the "Photoshop" Menu → "Preferences..." → "File Handling"

In both versions: Change "Maximize PSD and PSB Compatibility" to "Never" in the drop-down menu.

"Dangers" to turning off "Maximize Compatibility":

This function is designed to ensure that you can open your PSD file in previous versions of Photoshop, which can add significantly to your file size with functionality you may never need. For most people, this is not an issue, and you can safely turn off this function.

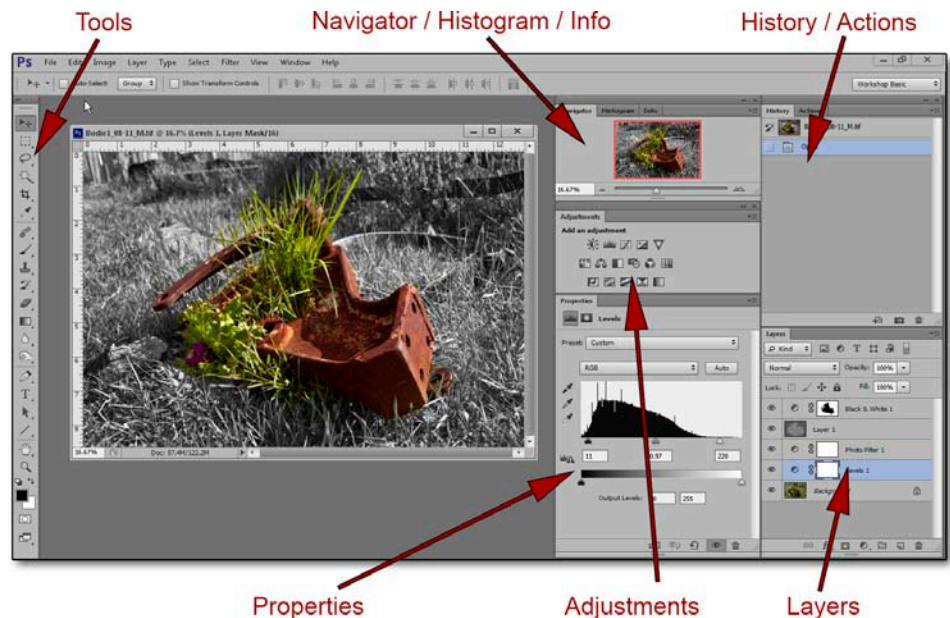
Chapter 5 - Setting up your Workspace with Panels

Think of **Panels** as miniature workspaces, each accomplishing a different function. There are almost two dozen different panels available to you, but in the spirit of K.I.S.S., I would suggest that you start with just nine, and add those you deem necessary as you gain more experience with Photoshop.

Below is a representation of the panels I would suggest that you set up on your Photoshop desktop to create a proper workspace:

Photoshop gives you a set of predefined workspaces: **You can access these by going to the “Window” menu → “Workspace”**. I would start with the **“Essentials”** Workspace, then I'd suggest that you add or subtract panels until you end up with just the following in your workspace:

1. **Tools panel**
2. **Layers panel**
3. **History panel**
4. **Actions panel**
5. **Navigator panel**
6. **Info panel**
7. **Histogram panel**
8. **Adjustments Panel**
9. **Properties Panel**



Why these Panels?

These nine panels are the ones that you'll use most. As it is important to keep things simple (Remember K.I.S.S.!), stick with these to start – you cannot go wrong.

Working with Panels in the Workspace:

- You'll notice that certain panels are "docked" to each other into **Tab Groups**: this is to save valuable "screen real estate" (By the way, "screen real estate" is not as critical if you use more than one monitor).
- **To add or remove a Panel from a Tab Group**, click on the **Tab**, hold down your left mouse button, and drag it into or out of the Group.
- **To add a Panel to your workspace**, go to the "Window" Menu, and simply place a checkmark beside the panel you wish to add. (Checked Panels are those visible in your Workspace)
- **To move a Panel**, place your mouse pointer over the name of the panel (the "tab"), you're your left mouse button down, and drag it to the desired location in your **Workspace** or **Tab Group**.
- **To resize a Panel (where available)**, place your cursor over the bottom right corner of the panel, and your pointer will turn into a double sided arrow. Hold your left mouse button down, and drag the panel to the desired size.
- **To delete a Panel**, simply click on the "x" to the right of the name in the tab. *You may have to remove this panel from a Tab Group to see it's "X"*. Don't worry if you accidentally delete a panel you need: you can go to the "Window" menu and "re-check" it.
- **To minimize a Panel or Tab Group**, click on the double arrow on the top right of the Panel or Tab Group. Click the double arrow again to expand to normal size.



Minimized
Tab
Group

Panel Options: In each panel, you'll notice a downward facing triangle with three parallel lines next to it in the upper right-hand portion of the panel. This gives you access to the Panel Options. Each panel will have a different set of options such as the size of the icons in the panel, the view available to you, and so on. You should explore these – For instance, I personally like larger icons in my layers panel.

Hide All Panels: If you're limited with screen "Real-estate" (small laptop, etc), use the "Tab" Key on your keyboard to hide all of your panels – perfect for looking at your images with a critical eye. Simply use the "Tab" Key again to get back to your Panels.

Maximize your Workspace: To avoid distractions, it's a good idea to "maximize" the Photoshop Program on your computer so that it "fills" your screen, avoiding other programs, icons, backgrounds, etc that might interfere with your Workspace.

To save your Workspace: Once you have set up your workspace, you can save it. Go to "Window" → "Workspace" → "Save Workspace...", and when prompted, give it an appropriate name. You can easily access it again 3 ways:

1. "Workspace" → then click on your saved workspace name at the bottom of the menu choices
2. By using the drop-down menu in the upper right corner of your Photoshop Workspace
3. By Resetting your Workspace: "Workspace" → "Reset (Name of Workspace)"