PhotoPhile for iPad

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Introduction

Have you ever found yourself scrolling through page after page of photos on your iPad, searching for just the right one to show someone? Wouldn't it be great if you could actually search your photos to find the right one instead of having to flick through them all? Most photos have a lot of information hidden away which can be used to help you find exactly what you're looking for.

PhotoPhile lets you use this information, and to add your own, letting you search your iPad's photo library any way you like, any time you like.

It also integrates with Adobe Lightroom to work as a remote reviewing station, letting you use your iPad as a presentation device complete with Lightroom-specific data. Changes you make to ratings, captions and other Lightroom features can be optionally be copied back from your iPad to your Lightroom catalog later.

Lightroom Integration

If you are a user of Adobe Lightroom, then PhotoPhile is for you. You will be able to publish photos directly from Lightroom to PhotoPhile on your iPad, complete with much of the Lightroom metadata. Star ratings, flags and labels are copied along with much of the standard EXIF metadata, and of course all of this can be used for searching and filtering.

You can also choose to pay a small fee for the ability to send any changes you make to this data on your iPad back to Lightroom, making PhotoPhile an integrated, portable assistant to Lightroom!

Requirements

- Any iPad with iOS 5.1 or higher
- iPad 2 or better needed for AirPlay support
- (Optional) Adobe Lightroom 3 or better for Lightroom integration

Optional Extras

The free version of PhotoPhile is limited in some ways. To get rid of the restrictions, you can buy some optional extra features.

- **Publish Unlimited**

  This removes all restrictions on the number of photos. Specifically, you can post any number of photos to Twitter and Facebook at once, and you won't get adverts displayed in the slideshow when you have many photos in the PhotoPhile library. It also removes the "Posted with PhotoPhile" text that is added to photo captions when posting to Twitter and Facebook.

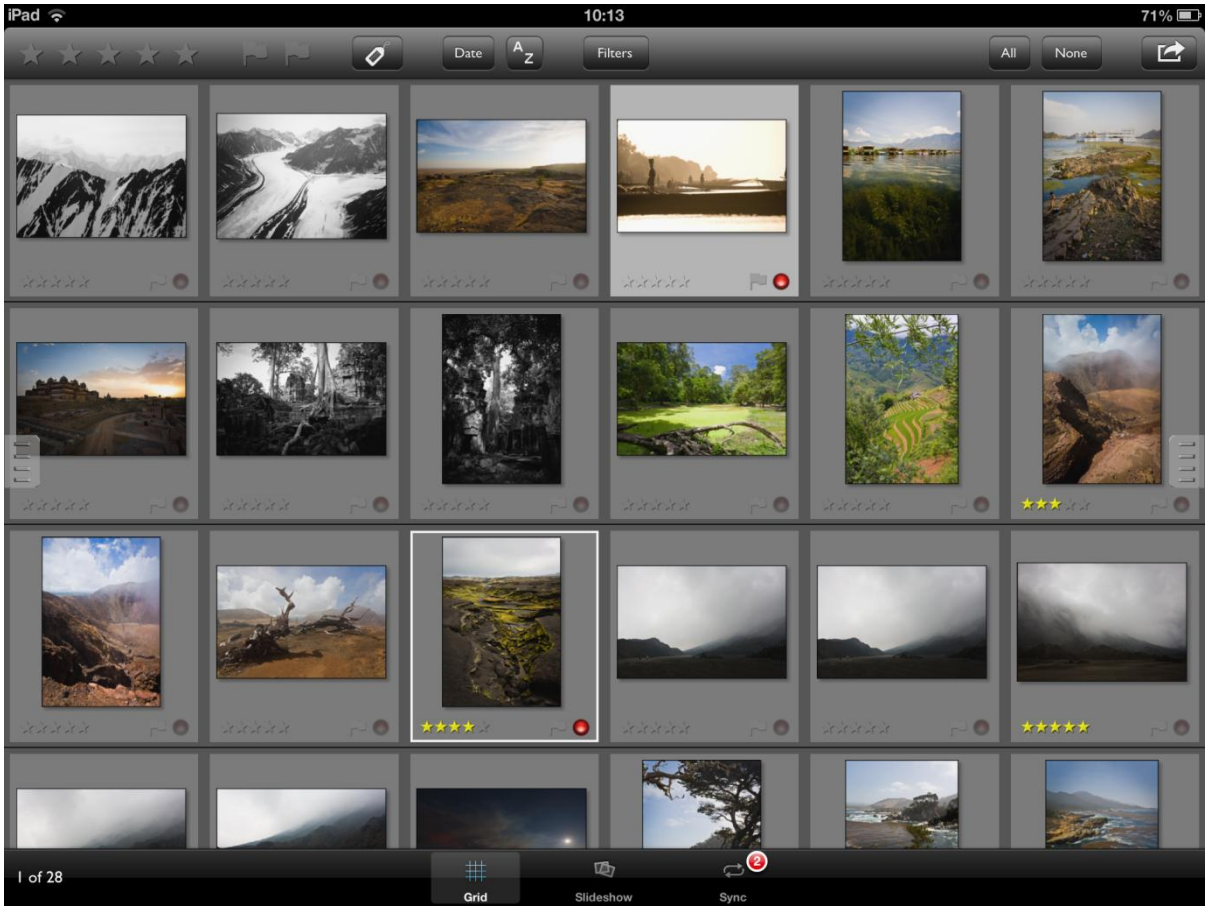
- **Two-way Sync**

  If you are using the Lightroom publishing feature, this option will let you push all of the metadata changes you make on your iPad back to your Lightroom catalog. In short, any changes you make to stars, flags, captions, comments or labels will be copied back to your Lightroom catalog whenever you sync.

  Lightroom 4 or better is needed to synchronise the "flags" for accept and reject in either direction, because prior to this it was not possible for a plugin to access flag values.

Grid Tab

This is the main work area of PhotoPhile. Like many photo-asset managers, it shows a grid containing thumbnails of all the photos it knows about. When you first start, PhotoPhile will need to create the thumbnails. They should begin to appear within the first second or so, and once it has drawn them once it will not need to re-draw them unless you change the size of the grid.



Basic Controls

The grid works much the way you would expect. You can drag it up and down to show different thumbnails by dragging your finger up or down. Change the size of the thumbnails using the standard “pinch” gesture.

Single-tapping on a photo in the grid selects it, and the background will change colour to show that it is selected. Double-tapping will open the “Slideshow” tab for the selected photo or photos, depending on your settings.

You can select many photos at once by holding one and tapping another; all the photos in between the two will be selected.

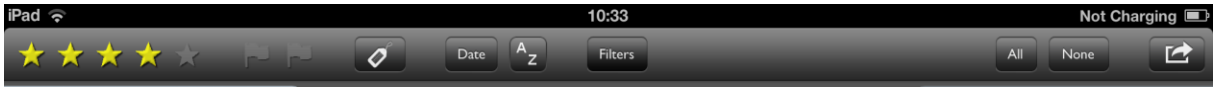
The Photos

Each photo in the grid is shown as a separate cell, with information about the photo displayed along the bottom of the cell. To the left, the star-rating of the photo is shown. To the right, the "flag" value (selected, rejected or none) is shown using a flag symbol. There is also a red light which will show when a particular photo's data has been changed.

If a photo has a label, it will be shown with a coloured border around the cell.

Data Controls

Along the top of the Grid display, there is a toolbar with controls which affect the photos' data. This is what lets you sort and filter the photos effectively.



First are five "star" icons. Tapping any of these will change the star-rating of all selected photos to the number of stars you choose. For example, selecting the third star icon will set all the selected photos to three-star rating.

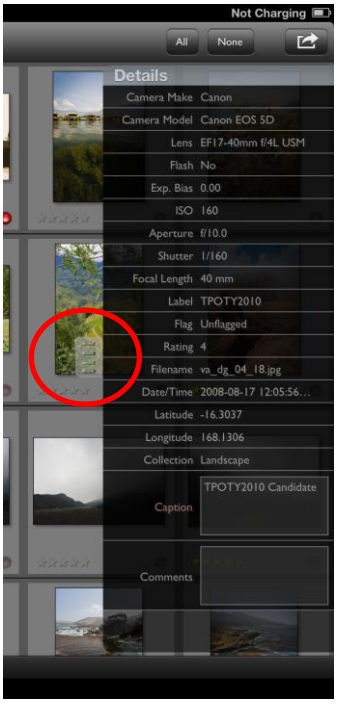
When you select a photo, the star icons light up to show the star-rating in the same way as the little symbols beneath the photo. If you want to remove the star-rating, you can do it by tapping the same rating that it already has. That is, if a photo has three stars then setting three stars again will clear the rating.

Next come two "flag" icons. As with the star icons, these light up according to the data for the current photo. You can change photos between "selected", "rejected" and "not flagged" by tapping on whichever flag you want. It doesn't make sense to have a photo being marked both as "selected" and "rejected", so setting one flag status will clear any other.

Finally there is a "Label" icon. This lets you set a label – a word or short phrase – against any photo. You can choose existing labels from the list, or add a new one. As with the "flag" status, you can only set one label on any given photo.

Detail Panel

To the right of the main screen, there is a small grey tab in the middle. Pull this out to reveal the “Details” panel. This shows everything that PhotoPhile knows about the selected photo or photos. How much of this is available will depend on the individual photo.



If you have more than one photo selected, then this may show “<Mixed>” for some things. This means that some of the photos selected have different values set, and it can’t show them all. If you don’t want this, there is a setting called “Information Display Type” which will change the Details panel so that it displays the details for only the most recently selected photo, no matter how many you have selected.

You can edit the “Caption” and “Comment” values directly from here, just tap in the box to bring up the iPad keyboard.

Collections Panel

To the left of the main grid display is another pull-out panel, the Collections panel. This shows all the groups of photos that you have available.

If you synchronised photos from Lightroom, the collections here will be exactly the same as those that you created in Lightroom. Photos coming from iTunes or the Photos App on the iPad will also have whatever folders or Albums you might have set up.

Wherever they have come from, you can use the collections to easily find a set of photos; just tap the collection and only the photos that belong to that collection, or collections under it, will be shown in the grid.

If you have changed the data for any photos, a count is displayed next to the collection that contains them.

Unfortunately it's not possible to move photos from one collection to another, because the collections are all managed by their source and PhotoPhile can't tell the sources to move photos around. If you want to change the contents of the collections, you'll need to go back to wherever you set them up (Photos App, iTunes or Lightroom) and move photos around there.

Don't worry though, there is another easy way of getting groups of photos in any order you want!

Filters

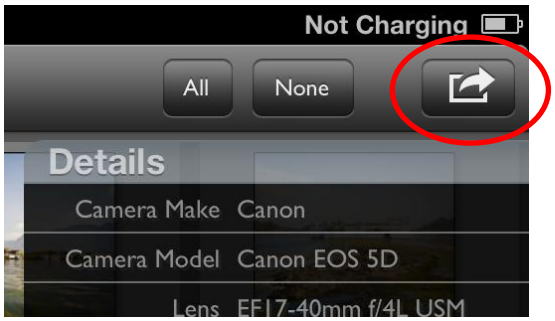
Beneath the collections, a separate section lists any filters you have defined. See the "Filters" selection for details of how to create and save a filter.

To re-apply a saved filter, all you need to do is tap it. Normally, when you tap a filter, PhotoPhile applies it to the entire catalog. If you'd prefer to apply filters to whichever collection you have displayed, you can change this in the iPad's Settings.

Each filter can be deleted or renamed if you tap the arrow icon to the right.

Photo Commands

At the far right of the toolbar at the top of the page is an action menu which lets you work on any selected photos.



- **Delete Local Photo** removes PhotoPhile's copy of the selected photos. This does *not* delete photos from either the Photos App or Lightroom. This is mostly useful for freeing some space without having to re-sync from Lightroom. Very little additional space is needed to work with photos from the Photos App because PhotoPhile does not take an additional copy.
- **Delete Thumbnails** works in a similar way, but only deletes the stored thumbnail. PhotoPhile stores thumbnails for your photos when it loads them for the first time because it makes it much faster to display. This does take up room on your iPad though, so if you are running short of storage space you can delete the thumbnails.
- **Copy to Camera Roll** creates copies of the selected photos in the Photos App. If the photo is already in the Photos App, a new copy will be created. You will be able to choose any Album in the Photos App to copy the photos into, or create a new one.
- **Revert Changes** takes any changes to the metadata of the selected photos and puts it back into it's original state. For photos from the Photos App, this typically restores the stars and flag to "none", and clears the label and caption. For photos from Lightroom, the original state is the value that was set by Lightroom during the last sync.
- **Store Changes** is the opposite – it overwrites the default state for each photo with the current settings for flags, caption, stars, comments and label. This has no effect for photos from Lightroom because the default state is controlled by Lightroom.
- **Tweet** sends a copy of each selected photo to your Twitter account, if you have set one up in your iPad. Twitter may impose limits on the number and size of photos that can be sent at once, so if you are sending a large number of photos you might need to do it in several batches. The first time you use this feature, you will need to grant access to PhotoPhile. Each photo will have a comment set from it's Caption text in PhotoPhile. When you tweet several photos with the same caption, PhotoPhile adds a sequence number to each photo because Twitter rejects what it believes are duplicate tweets, even if they have different photos attached. If you have not bought the "Publish Unlimited" option, the caption will also have "# PhotoPhile" added to it.
- **Post on Facebook** sends a copy of each selected photo to your Facebook wall, if you have set one up in your iPad. The first time you use this feature, you will need to grant access to PhotoPhile. Each photo will have a comment set from it's Caption text in PhotoPhile. If you have not bought the "Publish Unlimited" option, the caption will also have "Sent from PhotoPhile" added to it.

Filtering Controls

One of the key features of PhotoPhile is the ability to filter your photos any way you like. It doesn't matter where your photos are stored, or whether you imported them from Lightroom or the Photos App, you can filter them any way you like. This is all done with the "Filters" button.

Tap the Filters button and a new panel opens at the bottom of the screen. Initially it's mostly empty, but this space will soon be used. At the top of the Filters panel, there are three buttons; "Save", "Add" and "Done".

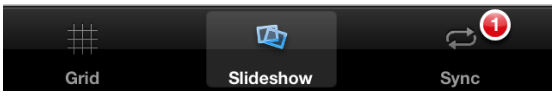
Tap the "add" button and you will get a list of things you can filter on. Pick one of these and it will be added to the filter area, most likely as a list. Simply choose items from the list and the grid display will update. Remove the filter by tapping the red X button.

You can add more filters using the "Add" button. Each filter you add is applied to the photos in the grid; for example, if you choose one filter on "Camera Model" and another on "ISO", the photos in the grid will be those which have the appropriate camera model *and* the required ISO settings.

If you come up with a combination of filters that you might want to use again, you can save it using the "Save" button. Name the filter any way you like, and it will be added to the Collections Panel. Now you can re-apply that filter with a single tap.

Slideshow Tab

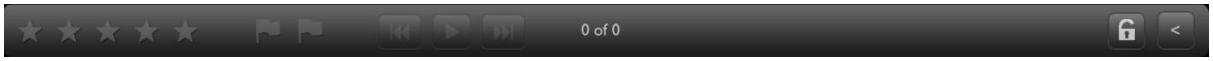
Once you've got some photos selected in the Grid tab, you can view them full-screen using the Slideshow tab. Double-tapping a photo in the grid will open the slideshow automatically, or you can just tap the "Slideshow" button on the tab-bar at the bottom of the screen.



With the slideshow open, you can swipe left and right to move to the previous and next photos, as you'd expect. You can also tap on the left or right edges of the screen to do the same thing.

Double-tapping on the screen will zoom in as far as you can, or zoom out if you're already zoomed in. You can control the zoom more precisely using the normal "pinch" gesture.

Finally, if you hold a finger on the screen then you will get a box which lets you edit the caption and comment fields for the current photo. If you're using PhotoPhile to show photos to clients, you can disable this dialog (or either of the caption or comment fields) in the Settings.



Just like in the Grid tab, you can use the stars and flags in the toolbar to change the current photo's rating. As with the caption and comment editor, you can disable these controls if you need to using the Settings app.

If you don't want to swipe through your photos by hand, you can tell PhotoPhile to cycle through them automatically using the "Play" button on the toolbar. The speed can be controlled in the Settings app.

While the slideshow is playing, the toolbar will normally disappear. If you want to lock it in place, maybe to keep the flag and star controls visible, press the padlock button. If it's not visible, just tap the screen anywhere and it will re-appear.

The last button on the toolbar lets you hide or show the toolbar manually.

AirPlay Support

If you have an iPad 2 or better, you can use the iPad's "AirPlay Mirroring" to send the iPad's display in real-time to an AirPlay-capable device such as an Apple TV.

http://www.apple.com/uk/appletv/airplay/

You can also use a normal Mac or Windows PC as an AirPlay device with low-cost software such as AirParrot, Reflector or AirServer.

Unlike many Apps, PhotoPhile is aware of AirPlay and can take extra advantage of it. Instead of simply mirroring the iPad's display, it can be set to always use the AirPlay device in slideshow mode. This lets you have the grid displayed on your iPad for browsing and selecting photos, and the photos themselves displayed on the AirPlay device at the same time. This option is controlled by a setting called "Airplay Screen".

- "**Last selected photo**" shows the most-recently selected photo only.
- "**All selected photos**" shows a slideshow of all the photos you currently have selected in the grid.
- "**Mirror Device**" is the default AirPlay behaviour, simple copying the iPad's screen.

Switchng AirPlay on is easy. Press the "Home" button on your iPad twice, quickly. A bar opens at the bottom of the screen showing Apps you're currently using. Swipe to the left and you'll eventually get to a page of controls, showing rotation lock, brightness, volume etc. If there is an AirPlay device on the network, a fourth control will be visible to the right of the "play" controls, looking like a square with an arrow pointing to it.

Tap this and a menu appears, showing all available display devices. To switch AirPlay on, you need to select the AirPlay device – for example, in the screenshot a Windows PC called "Jim-I7" is selected – and also switch the "Mirroring" control on.

Lightroom Integration

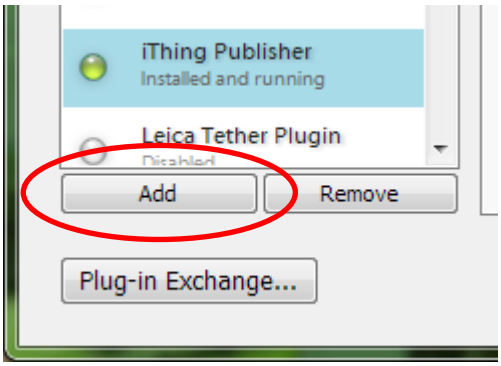
If you are a user of Adobe's Lightroom software, PhotoPhile will act as a remote console which will let you view much of the extra information that Lightroom stores for your photos. More specifically, any flags, star ratings, labels and captions that are set in Lightroom will be exported to PhotoPhile as well as the main EXIF data from your camera. As you'd expect, you can filter and sort using any of this data.

If you choose to buy the optional two-way sync feature, you can also send changes to any of this data back from PhotoPhile to Lightroom, giving you a complete mobile solution for working with your Lightroom catalog. You don't need to be connected to the same network because any changes you make on the iPad are stored and synchronised later.

A plugin is needed to let Lightroom work with PhotoPhile. This is included in the App; if you go to the Sync tab, a web address will be shown. Enter this addresss into a browser on your PC or Mac and you will download the plugin, which can then be installed as normal.

Install Plugin

After you have downloaded the plugin, open the zip file by double-clicking on it and you will find a normal Lightroom plugin. Copy this somewhere on your disk – anywhere will do – and then open the Plugin Manager from Lightroom's File menu. Now click the Add button at the bottom of the plugin list and select the plugin from wherever you stored it, and it will be loaded and activated.



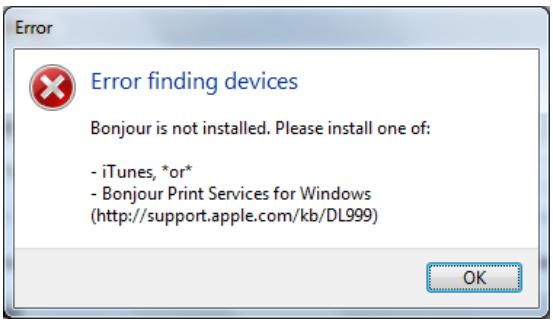
Install Bonjour if iTunes is not installed

On the Mac, nothing extra is needed for the plugin to be able to find your iPad. On Windows, you may need to install a feature called "Bonjour". If you already have iTunes installed, it will be present already. The easiest way to find out if you need to install Bonjour is to use the plugin – if you need it, the plugin will tell you.

You can download Bonjour for Windows directly from Apple:

http://support.apple.com/kb/DL999

Despite the page being headed "Bonjour Print Services", this installs software which allows any Apple devices, not just printers, to be found on your network.

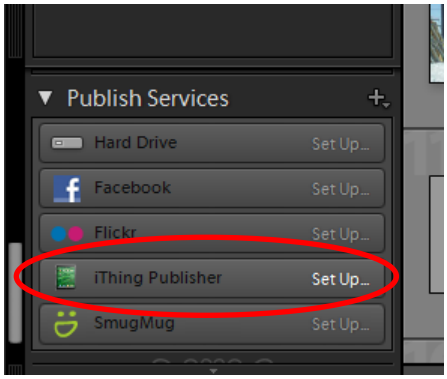


Set up Published Collections

The plugin uses Lightroom's standard "Published Collections" feature. This allows you to set up normal or "smart" collections which are then used to synchronise photos. Lightroom tracks which photos have changed and only publishes the ones it needs to instead of having to re-export the entire collection every time.

Setting up a Published Collection is very similar to setting up an exporter and a collection at the same time.

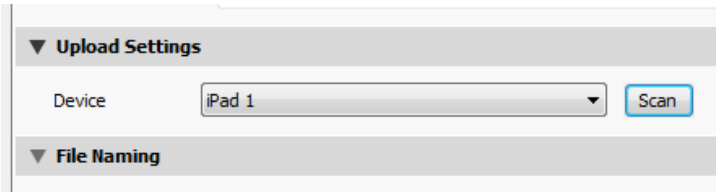
On the left-hand side of Lightroom's Library page, scroll down until you find the "Publish Services" section. Under this you should see a button called "iThing Publisher". Either click on this if it says "Setup…", or right-click and choose the "Create Published Folder" option from the menu that appears.



At the top of the setup dialog, you will see a drop-down list of all the devices on your network which are currently running PhotoPhile. If your device doesn't appear, make sure PhotoPhile is running and press the "Scan" button to refresh the list.

Simply pick your device from the list and the plugin will set the appropriate screen size in the "Image Sizing" section. You can override the resizing, of course. By default it will choose a size that fits your device best, but you may want to change the sizes or tell it not to resize at all. Bear in mind that older iPads may not have as much memory available as newer ones and might struggle to show full-size photos.

The other settings in this dialog can be whatever you prefer.

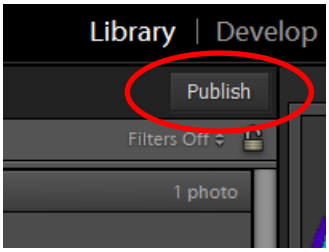


Adding photos to your Published Collection is a simple as dragging them over it, just like with a normal collection. You can also set up Published Smart Collections which find photos automatically based on a search that you define, and Collection Sets which simply group several collections together.

Any collection names you set in Lightroom as well as collection sets will be used when synchronising with PhotoPhile, so they will appear in PhotoPhile's "Collections" tab exactly as you create them in Lightroom.

If you want to create Published Collections for more than one iPad, you can do this by right-clicking on the "iThing Publisher" button and selecting the item called "Create another publish service via iThing Publisher".

Sync from Lightroom to PhotoPhile

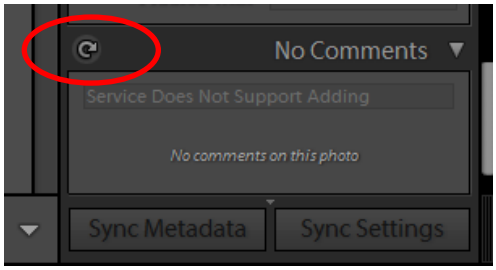


After you have created a Published Collection and added some photos to it, whenever you view that collection you will see a “Publish” button above the main grid area. Make sure PhotoPhile is running and click this button, and any changes that you have made will be sent over WiFi to your iPad. New photos will be copied down, and any photos you have removed from the Published Collection will be deleted.

It may take some time to sync the first time, because Lightroom needs to load and render all of the photos in the collection. These are then sent over WiFi. During the sync, your iPad will not normally go to sleep. After the initial sync, only those photos which have changed will be copied, making it much faster in most cases.

If you are using a version of Lightroom earlier than Lightroom 4, it is unfortunately not possible to send the “Flag” status to PhotoPhile. Lightroom 4 was the first version to introduce the ability for a plugin to access the flag status for photos. The star rating, label, caption and many EXIF values are copied from Lightroom 3 onwards.

Sync from PhotoPhile to Lightroom



If you have bought the “two-way sync” option, you can sync any changes you made on the iPad back to Lightroom. This will be done automatically after each “Publish”, but you may well want to read data from the iPad first. If so, select any photo that is part of a Published Collection and then scroll right to the bottom of the right-hand panel in Lightroom’s Library. There will be a section called “Comments” or “No Comments”, and in the header of this section is a small “cycle” icon looking like a curved arrow. Click this to read all the changes from your iPad. Note that this brings across *all* the changes for the current collection, not just for the photo you selected.

In Lightroom 3 it is not possible to sync the “Flag” status for photos for the same reason described above.

Summary of Settings

There are several settings which allow you to change the way that PhotoPhile works. These are all found in the iPad's "Settings" app in the "PhotoPhile" section.

General

Read Photos from Photos App

If you plan on using PhotoPhile exclusively with Adobe Lightroom, you can switch off the support for the iPad's own Photos App. If this setting is on, all the photos in the Photos App will be imported automatically.

Deselect all others on double-tap

When you double-tap on a photo, it is opened in the Slideshow tab. With this option set on, all other selected photos are de-selected if you double-tap. Otherwise, existing selected photos will be left selected when you return from the slideshow.

Auto-hide Collections

When you tap on a collection, this setting controls whether the Collections panel hides itself automatically or not. If you are browsing through collections, it may be more useful to leave the panel visible.

Information Display Type

When you have more than one photo selected, the Details panel shows the metadata for the selected photos. This setting controls whether it shows the details for only the most recently selected photo, or all details which are common to all selected photos.

Preset Filters go to Root

When you tap on a saved filter in the Collections panel, normally the filter is applied to the entire set of photos that PhotoPhile knows about. This setting can be turned off if you prefer to leave the currently selected collection as it is.

Lightroom

Set Label on changed photos when syncing

If you enter a name here, it will be set as a label to all changed photos when they are synchronised with Lightroom, if you have bought the option to do this. It allows you to easily identify any photos which have been altered. This might be useful if they are being passed onto other staff members; for example, you could set a label called "Needs Work" that can be used as a filter in Lightroom.

Slideshow Options

Airplay Screen

If you have an iPad2 or better, you can choose how to handle an AirPlay device. This option lets you choose between a simple mirror, or showing the last-selected photo, or all selected photos in a loop.

Show Flag Controls

If you are planning on using PhotoPhile to show photos to clients, you may not want them setting flag ratings from the Slideshow tab. Using this setting, you can hide the controls.

Show Star Controls

As for the flag controls, this lets you hide the star-rating controls when in the slideshow tab.

Allow Editing of Caption

This lets you disable the editing of photo captions in the Slideshow tab.

Allow Editing of Comments

This lets you disable the editing of photo comments in the Slideshow tab.

Slideshow Delay

This simply sets the length of time each photo is displayed when using the automatic slideshow.

Help Pages

Each of the tabs has a help page, which is shown when you first use that tab. Once it's been read, you can hide it using a control in the help window. If you want to re-enable them for any reason, the three settings here will do that.