

All This DAM Stuff

Text and photography copyright Rod Barbee. All rights reserved.

[Home](#) | [Wimberley Head](#) | [Sidekick](#) | [Plamp](#) | [Flash Brackets](#)

[www.tripodhead.com](#) | [QR Plates](#) | [QR Clamps](#) | [Order Our Products](#) | [E-Mail Us](#)

Wimberley

Do you know what the easiest part about digital photography is? The photography itself. Do you know what the hardest part is? For many it's not Photoshop, it's not figuring out the menus on digital cameras, it's not even color management. The hardest part is managing all those digital files.

For me, managing my digital images has created somewhat of a roadblock to my productivity. I know how to optimize my images for many end uses. I know how to get great looking prints, and I'm good at using my digital camera. But naming, managing, backing up, finding and using all those images? If there is one least efficient way of doing all that I've probably already tried it.

Digital Asset Management (DAM) is the latest buzzword in a field that seems to be nothing but buzzwords. From the moment you bring your images in to the computer, you're in the realm of Digital Asset Management.

In a way, Digital Asset Management is a lot like Photoshop or even photography itself: there's no one right way to do it. Much of it is personal preference and what methods make sense to you. And like Photoshop and photography, there's a lot of information to help guide you.

During the time I've been struggling with this issue, I've discovered some great resources. In the interest of saving someone else all that web surfing time, I've compiled a short list of some of the more useful resources I've come across.

For starters, I'd like to recommend a couple of books that have been of great help. The first one is *The DAM Book* by Peter Krogh. This book is by a photographer and written for photographers. Though it's written from the point of view of an assignment/editorial photographer, Krogh's advice and solutions are applicable to the outdoor and nature photographer. The other book is *Real World Camera Raw for Adobe Photoshop CS2* by Bruce Fraser. It's one of the best references around for using Camera Raw. Though Digital Asset Management is not the main subject of this book, it does have entire chapters about workflow, metadata, and automation.

To get you started in your DAM life, here are a few websites to help with those first wobbly steps:

- www.thedambook.com - This site by Peter Krogh supports *The DAM Book*. Here you'll find more useful links as well as access to his excellent forum.
- www.controlledvocabulary.com - Created by David Riecks, this is another good source for all sorts of DAM information. You can also purchase his keyword catalog from this site.
- [The Portfolio FAQ](#) - A great resource for users of Extensis Portfolio.

Web Forums

Web forums like this one are great places for getting quick answers. And if you're in the right forum, you'll get your answers even quicker. It just makes sense to ask questions about Adobe Bridge in a forum dedicated to Bridge, doesn't it? Below are a few forums I've found to be invaluable.

- [Adobe Forums](#) - Including forums on DNG, Camera Raw, Bridge, etc. Probably the best first place to go with your Photoshop, Bridge, DNG, and Camera Raw questions.
- [The DAM Book Forum](#) - A great place to go for questions about workflow, Bridge, DNG, applications, software issues, etc.
- [Portfolio FAQ User to User Forum](#) - This independent forum is not provided by Extensis, but it contains lots of great info from many very helpful people.

- [Iview Media Pro Forum](#) - Provided by Iview-Multimedia.

Software Utilities

Downloader Pro for moving images from card or camera to computer. This utility includes a powerful automatic file naming feature capable of extracting information from the image file itself. Also has the ability to segregate images by date, job, camera, ISO, etc. A fantastic utility, highly recommended. Windows only. From [Breeze Systems](#).

Breezebrower Pro. Also from [Breeze Systems](#). The latest version can even accommodate a keyword catalog to streamline your key wording. It also quickly performs lossless JPEG rotation. Though more of a browser rather than a DAM application, it's still worth having. As with Downloader Pro, Breezebrower has a very powerful file naming utility. It also has a robust web gallery generator; some of the templates are even designed for e-commerce.

Image Info Toolkit for editing IPTC data, though I use it only for generating keywords. This handy utility will generate keywords, including synonyms, from a keyword catalog (that must be purchased separately). You can also build your own keyword catalog that employs your own controlled vocabulary. A keyword catalog is also available for purchase at the Controlled Vocabulary website (see below). Image Info Toolkit: www.picturefinder.com.

David Riecks had a great movie that shows you how to use IIT with Photoshop CS to add keywords to an image: <http://www.controlledvocabulary.com/imagedatabases/sampleqt.html>.

Regular backups are an important part to any workflow. I've been using [Genie Backup Pro](#) for several months now and am very happy with it. I have a number of backup jobs I run, some are for images, some are for business documents, some are for articles and teaching material. Genie Backup Pro gives you plenty of choices as to what kind of back up you want to do (Full backup, incremental, differential, and mirror). You can also schedule backups for whenever you like. Restoration is a breeze too.

During this whole painful process of developing my own DAM practices, I've actually used several different file naming schemes. Every time I come up with something "better", I end up needing to change the file names of older images. This could have been a real pain if I'd simply renamed files in Windows. Instead I looked for a flexible file renaming utility. One I found that I really like is [NameWiz](#) by Softbyte Labs. NameWiz lets me delete, insert, or replace from anywhere within the file name. It can also generate file names and a whole lot more.

There's a lot to learn in this realm of efficiently managing your pictures and it can easily overwhelm you. The resources listed above can go a long way towards simplifying that process.

Comments on NPN nature photography instructional articles? Send them to the [editor](#).

RB-NPN 0933



Rod Barbee is a professional photographer, writer, and instructor. He is a regular contributor to *Outdoor Photographer* magazine and has also been published in *Nature's Best* magazine, *Audubon* and *Mead* calendars, *Northwest Travel* and *Oregon Coast* magazines, *Orvis* clothing catalog, the *National Park Service*, and more. Several of his images appear in the Amphoto book "American Vision". His first book, [The Photographer's Guide to the Oregon Coast](#), co-written with David Middleton, is available nationwide.

Rod has taught nature photography through Bellevue Community College in Washington state, The Mountaineers in Seattle, Olympic College in Bremerton, WA, The Great American Photography Weekend workshops, and Olympic Mountain School of Photography. He is also a contributing editor to Naturephotographers.net, an online photography magazine.

The natural beauty discovered during backpacking trips into Olympic National Park led him to nature photography. It has since become a passion in his life from which he continues to learn and grow.

Rod and his wife Tracy Rowley live in Port Ludlow on Washington's Olympic peninsula.

[Site Map](#) • [NPN Membership](#) • [Front Page](#) • [Reader's Forum](#) • [Links](#) • [Gift Shoppe](#) • [Terms of Use](#)

Copyright 2000 - 2006, Nature Photographers Online Magazine, Inc. All rights reserved.