

“Which of my photographs is my favorite? The one  
I’m going to take tomorrow”

~ Imogen Cunningham

# Photo **Mechanic**

getting your photos from the camera to the computer and beyond

<http://www.camerabits.com>



College of Communications

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## Table **of** Contents

TOPIC	PAGE
Introduction	<a href="#">3</a>
Set up Photo Mechanic	<a href="#">4</a>
Importing Photos	<a href="#">7</a>
Captioning	<a href="#">9</a>
Editing Photos	<a href="#">10</a>
Moving/Copying Photos	<a href="#">15</a>

## Tips & Tricks

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**NOTE:** This tutorial was written for the Mac OS. The program should be very similar on a Windows computer

# Introduction

Photo Mechanic is a simple tool for organizing editing and captioning images

The application will allow you to quickly edit large groups of photographs and select and organize your favorites. You can caption photos, even transmit directly from within the program.

This **tutorial** is designed to quickly get you familiar with the key features of Photo Mechanic. It is NOT designed to detail every single feature of the program.

It is specifically written for **Photo Mechanic 5** and is current as of **August 2016**

This **tutorial** will look at these key features of Photo Mechanic

- 1 Set Photo Mechanic Preferences
- 2 Import photos from a camera to your computer or harddrive
- 3 Sort and edit photos
- 4 Caption photos
- 5 Copy or move photos to a different location

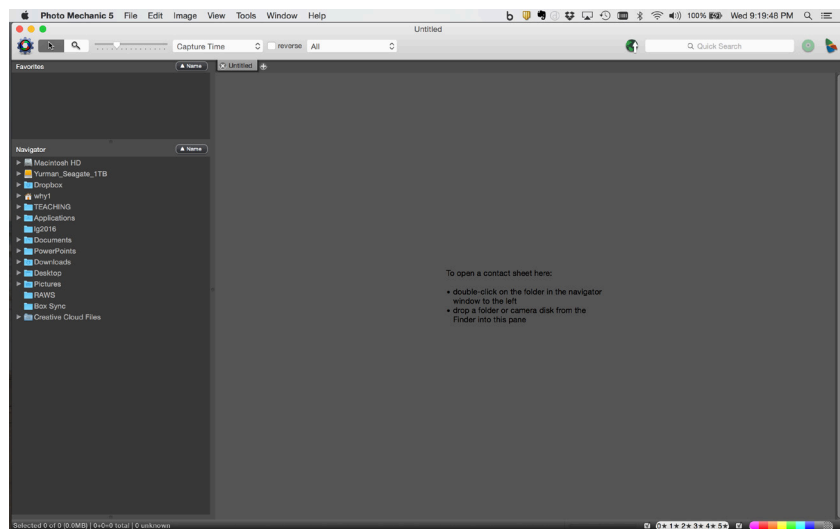
# Photo Mechanic Preferences

## Tips & Tricks

If you want to dive deep into the features of Photo Mechanic check out their Wiki @ <http://wiki.camerabits.com/>

Configured properly you can use Photo Mechanic quickly and easily to import photos from a camera's SD card, sort and select your best images and then edit in Photoshop or another image editing software application.

Open the Photo Mechanic Application. You'll probably see an empty 'contact sheet'

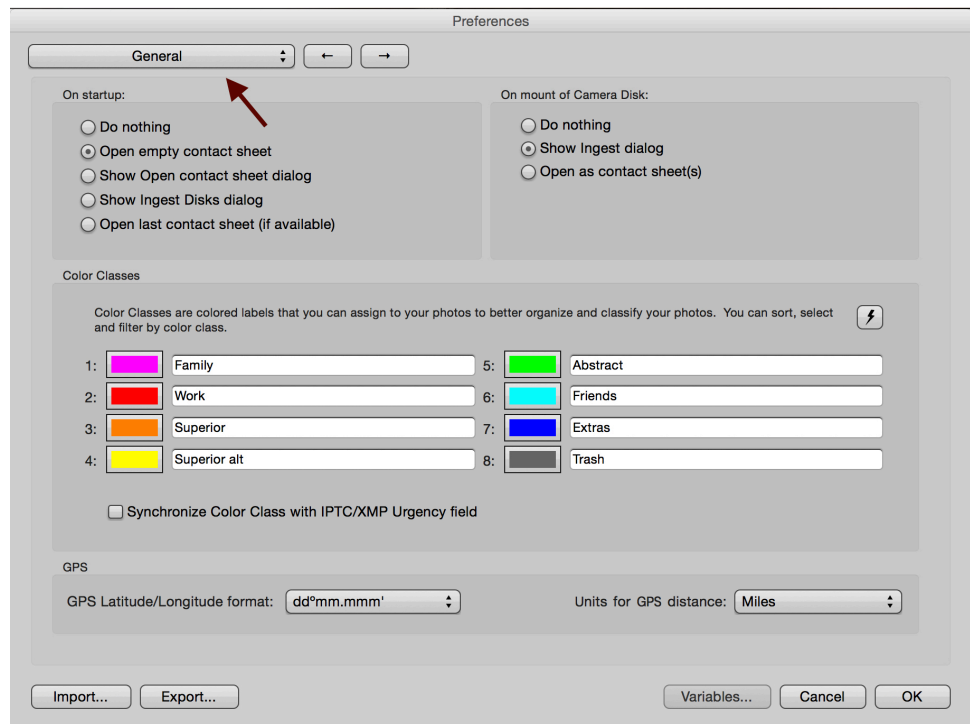


Note the contents of your computer on the left. This is one way to navigate in Photo Mechanic as we'll discuss later.

For now, go to the top and select Photo Mechanic 5 > Preferences...



## Tips & Tricks



**Note** there is a dropdown menu for different sets of preferences. Many of the settings can be configured to your personal choices and are pretty self explanatory.

Under **General** I suggest checking '**Show Ingest dialog**' under 'On Mount of Camera Disk:'

This will automatically open the Ingest function when you connect to a camera or card.

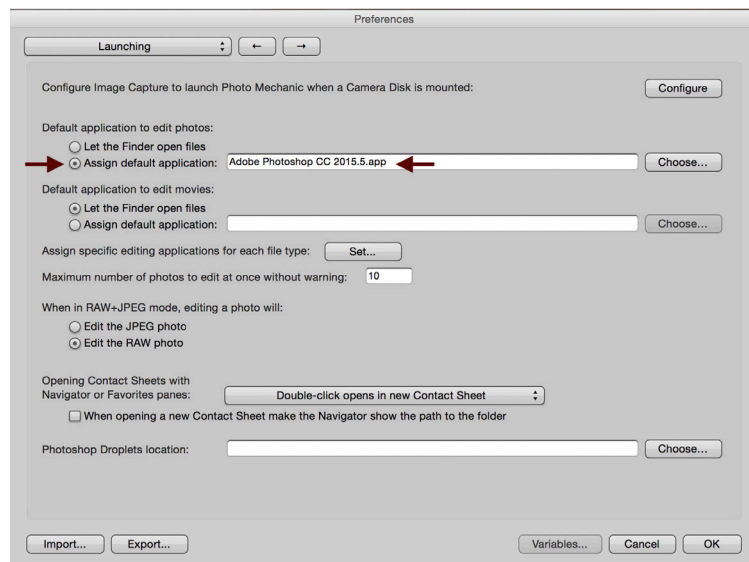
## Tips & Tricks

You can explore the many preference settings and make changes that fit your workflow.

But for the most part, starting out, you can simply **use the defaults**.

One other setting I recommend:

Under **‘Launching’** set the default application to whatever photo editing software exists on your computer – Photoshop for example. This will allow you to automatically open an image in Photoshop directly from Photo Mechanic.



[Watch a 2:13 video on setting preferences](#)

## Tips & Tricks

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**Metadata** is 'data about data'.

For photos it means attaching information about your photographs, digitally, to the image file.

You can add caption or copyright information to every file, automatically, in Photo Mechanic.

Metadata is searchable - making it a powerful tool for organizing your photos.

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# Getting Photos from your camera to your computer

There are many ways to get your images from your camera to your computer. You can simply plug in your camera or insert your card and then open the folders and drag the images to your computer.

Photo Mechanic provides a way to make that process quicker and seamless AND allow you to add information (metadata) at the same time.

Using Photo Mechanic's Ingest function you can copy image files to your computer while at the same time renaming the files, apply caption information and even copy to two places at the same time. (Allowing you to back up your files to a second hard drive for example)

## INGESTING

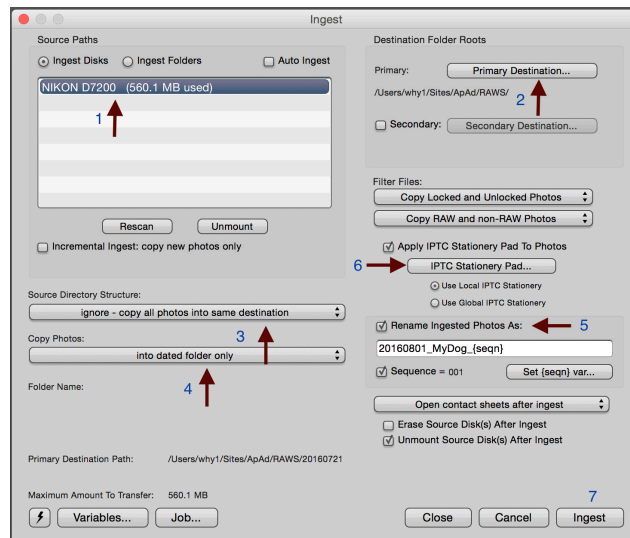
Open Photo Mechanic

Attach your camera or insert your card into your computer or card reader.

If you set your preferences, the Ingest window will open automatically. If not, go File>Ingest from the menu.

From the Ingest window, you will set some options and then click 'Ingest' and Photo Mechanic will copy photos off the card to your computer.

## Tips & Tricks



1. Select the card you want to ingest. NOTE if you have other hard-drives connected to your computer they will show up as well. MAKE SURE you select the camera card.
2. Choose a destination - This can be anywhere on your computer or external harddrive. IF you want, you can select a secondary destination as well.
3. In general, use the default 'ignore - copy all photos into same destination'. This puts all your photos in one folder.
4. Select the option that works best for you. I often put photos in a dated folder, but sometimes I want them in a folder with a name.
5. You can rename your photos - Check the sequence box and then 'Set (seqn) var' to choose a number sequence.
6. Click to apply a caption to all your photos using the stationary pad. You can then add to individual captions later as needed.
7. Click Ingest to start

[Watch a 3:22 video on ingesting in Photo Mechanic](#)



## Tips & Tricks

Good caption information makes your photos more valuable and easier to find.

You can't really search for photos, at least not yet. BUT you CAN search for the attached meta-data.

The context that captions give a photo make it more useful and valuable to editors.

Always include dates and locations. Make sure you spell names correctly and provide complete information about what is happening in the photograph.

## IPTC Stationary Pad

You can add a bulk caption to all your images at one time (returning later to add specifics to individual images)

In the Ingest window, select IPTC Stationary Pad and make sure the 'Apply IPTC Stationary Pad to Photos' is selected.

### Why Do This?

1. Will save you LOTS of time later on
2. Makes all your images immediately searchable.

The screenshot shows the 'IPTC Stationary Pad' window with several sections:

- Image Content:** Includes fields for Description/Caption (with a 'Replace' button), Description Writers, Headline, Keywords, Persons shown, Featured Org. Name, Featured Org. Code, and IPTC Scene.
- Event and Location:** Includes fields for Event, Date (set to 7/21/2016), City (State College), Location, State/Province (PA), Country, ISO Country Code, IPTC Subject Code, and Intellectual Genre.
- Locations Taken and Shown:** Includes a table for 'Location in which the image was created' and a 'Location Shown' table with columns for Sublocation, City, State, and Country.
- Image Rights:** Includes fields for Creator/Photographer (Will Yurman), Creator's Job Title, Copyright (© Will Yurman 2016), Credit, Source, Copyright URL, and Rights Usage Terms.

At the bottom, there are buttons for 'Clear', 'Load...', 'Save...', 'Job...', 'Sequence...', 'Variables...', 'Apply Stationary to Selected', and 'Close Stationary'.

### Description/Caption:

Enter the basic facts of the assignment and your photo credit. Use AP style for captions. Always include where and when the photo was taken as well as background and context.

### City, Location, State, Country

All of this is searchable later and can be useful

## Tips & Tricks

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If you use an external drive you can save this information and load it each time you use Photo Mechanic. (Unfortunately the lab computers erase data each night so you can't save it on the computers)

Click 'Save...' at the bottom left to save a caption. Click 'Load...' to install a previously save caption.

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## Date

Date the assignment was shot. Change this from 'Today' if necessary.

## Photographer, Credit, Copyright

Extremely important to have your name attached to your images.

### TIP

'option G' will create the copyright logo

## Email and URL

scroll down and enter your email and website if you have one.

# Working With Your Photos

Once you've ingested your photos you can begin to edit.

Photo Mechanic calls the page of thumbnails a **Contact Sheet**.

*The term comes from the days of film. A roll of film would be cut into strips and placed directly on a piece of photographic paper in the dark-room, usually held flat, in contact with the paper, with a piece of glass. This single print would show rows of images from a single roll of film. Photographers would select their favorites and then make full-size prints of just those images.*

Typically each folder of images can be displayed as a single contact sheet and can contain dozens, hundreds even thousands of images.

## Tips & Tricks

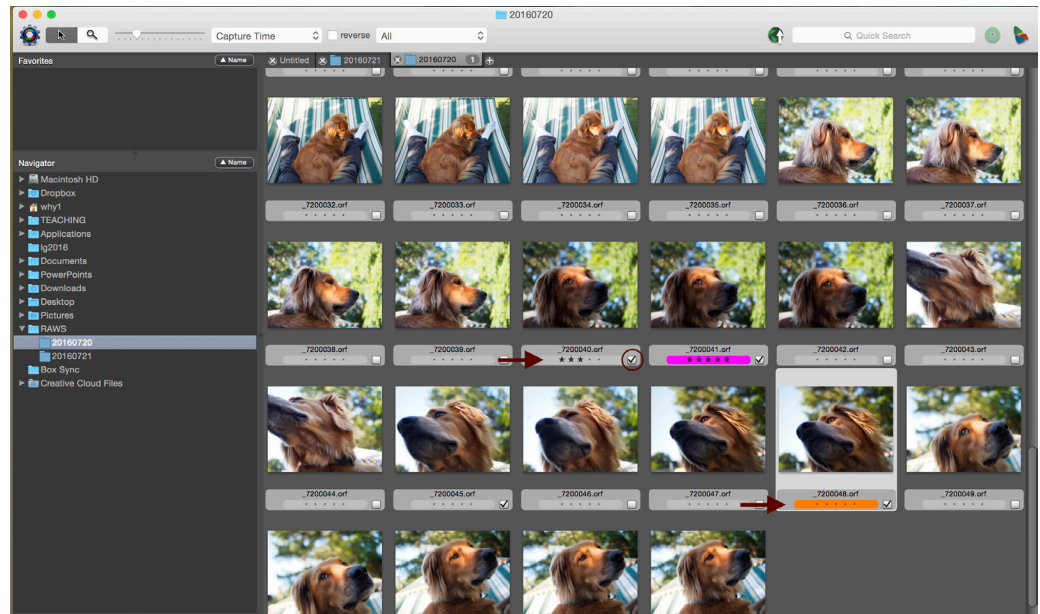
It is always quicker if you can learn keyboard shortcuts on the computer. The keyboard is faster than using a mouse or trackpad.

For Editing in Photo Mechanic:

**'T'** - will tag or un-tag a selected photo or photos.

**Control I** - will add one star. (Control 2 will add two starts, etc.)

**⌘ 1, ⌘ 2, ⌘ 3,** etc – will add a color class to a photo or photos.



Here's an example of a Contact Sheet with my dog once again the model.

You can have multiple Contact Sheets open at once. Notice the tabs at the top.

**Open new folders** of images as Contact Sheets by going File>Open Contact Sheet or by navigating to the folder using the navigator at left.

Notice how a few images are marked with **tags**, **ratings** and **color classes**.

**Tags** The small check box in the lower right of each image

**Ratings** One to five stars below each image

**Color Classes** Eight different colors that can be applied to a photo

You can use these in any combination as you select and edit your photos. This allows you to quickly edit a large collection of photos as you choose the best images.

## Tips & Tricks



Rollover any image and you'll see the following:

The arrows at the top allow you to rotate a photo

The 'i' button will bring up the caption window

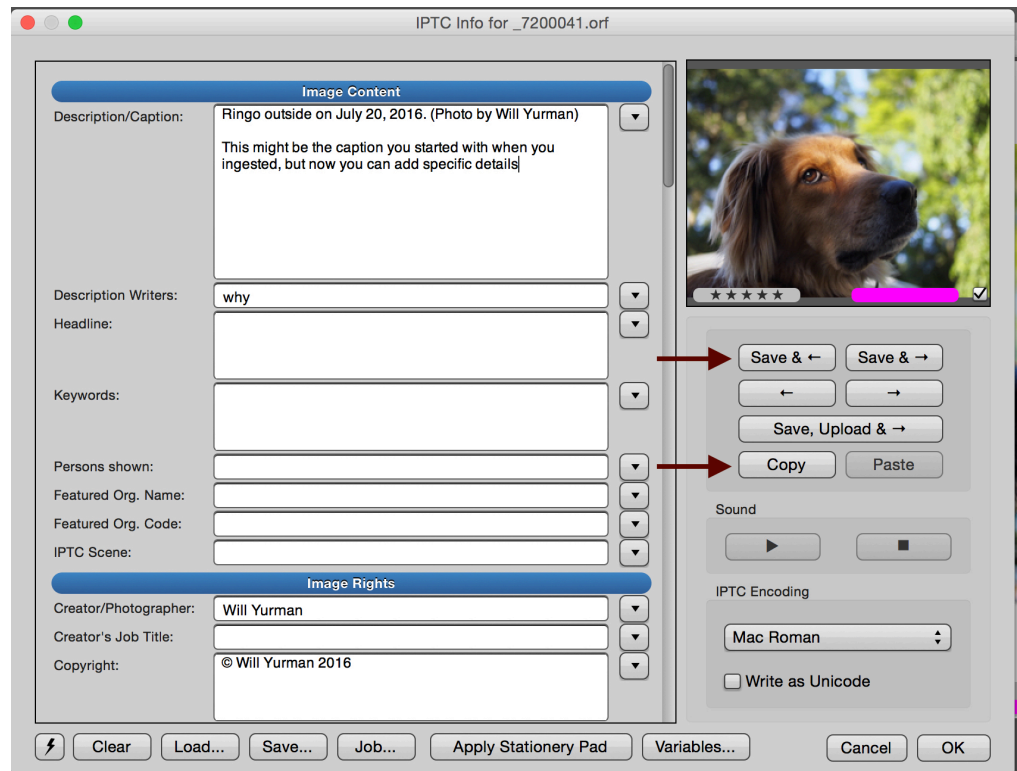
The magnifying glass will give you large preview of the photo

## Tips & Tricks

- You can select multiple photos in a contact sheet. Use the Shift key to select a group all in a row, hold the key and select the first and last to select them all.

Hold the Command key to select photos that aren't in a sequence

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### The 'i' button brings up the caption window.

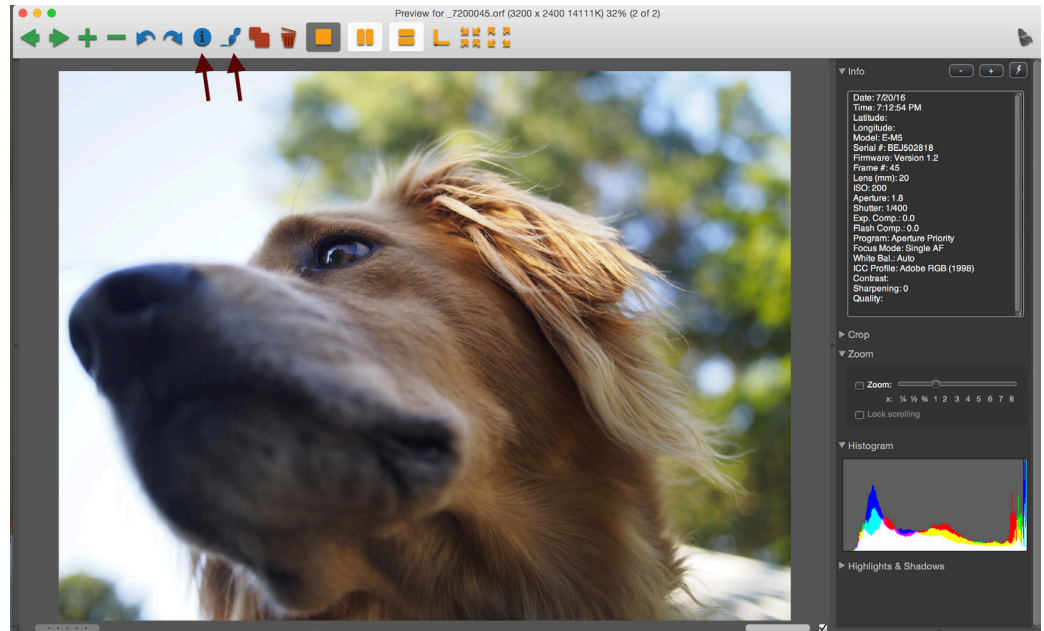
If you applied a caption at 'ingest' it will be here. You can make any changes or additions you like. If you are captioning multiple images use the 'Save and' buttons to advance through your selection.

If you have a caption you want to apply to more than one photo click the 'copy' button go to the next photo and click 'paste'.

You can save a caption for future use or load a preexisting caption using the buttons at the bottom.

## Tips & Tricks

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The magnifying glass brings up a large preview image

The large view allows you a close look at your photo.

Information on the right includes your camera settings - this can be helpful to see what worked or what mistakes you may have made.

The zoom function will allow you a very close look at your image - to check for sharpness for example.

The histogram is useful to see if your exposure is accurate.

At the top are a series of buttons. Notice you can bring up the caption in this view. You can also open the photo in Photoshop or another image editing app.



## Tips & Tricks

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Photo Mechanic has a spell checker built in.

Use it.

Spelling matters. Also always double check the spelling of names and places and other proper nouns.

Mistakes are embarrassing to your subjects and to you.

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With practice you can learn to quickly edit and sort and caption photos in Photo Mechanic.

Some photographers will edit in a series of steps. Say for example you shot 200 images at an event. They might go through and tag 20 of them as 'favorites' using either the tag tool or color coding them.

One strategy would be to copy those 20 into a new folder. **DON'T** move the photos, **copy** them. This leaves a complete, untouched set in one place.

From there, they may ultimately select the one or two images they want as their final selection - depending on the final use.

Again, copy those images to a new folder. Making copies means you always have an untouched original in case something goes wrong.

## MOVING/COPYING PHOTOS

**1.** Select the photos you want to copy to a new location. If you've tagged or color coded or rated them, you can choose to view that selection.

For tagged photos, use the dropdown menu at the top of the contact sheet and change 'All' to 'Tagged'

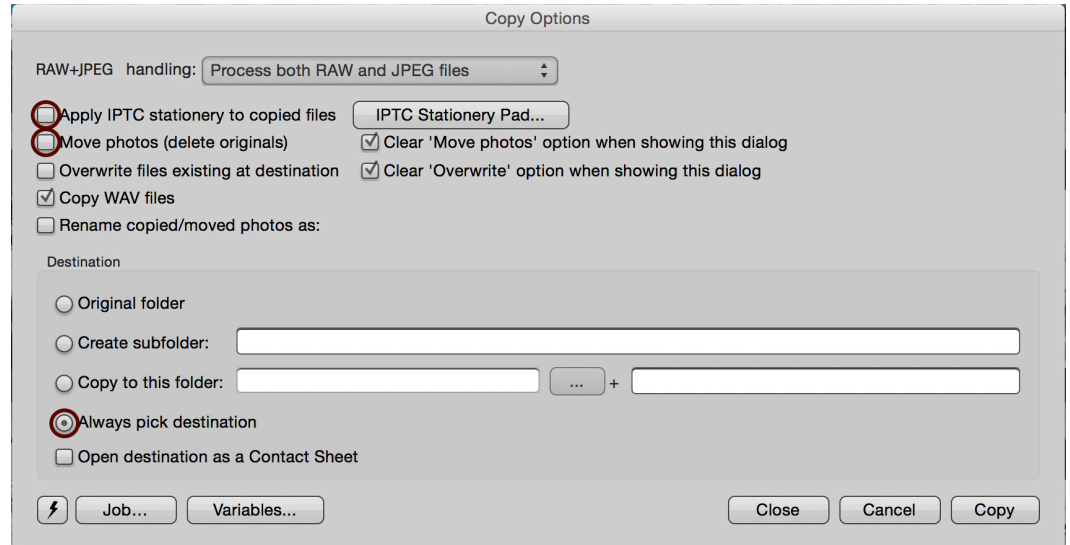
You can also go Edit>Select Rated, or Select Tagged, or Select Color class.

**2.** Highlight all the selected photos

**3.** Go File>Copy/Move Photos... (**⌘Y**)

## Tips & Tricks

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## Copy/Move

The Copy/Move box looks more complicated than it is.

The above settings will work in most situations.

1. Uncheck the Apply IPTC Stationary, otherwise your caption will be overwritten by your default caption.
2. Uncheck Move photos(delete originals). UNLESS you have a good reason for deleting the originals you want to make a COPY
3. Check Always pick destination.

Click 'Copy' and you'll then be asked where. You can create a new folder anywhere you like and Photo Mechanic will copy the images to the new destination.

[Watch a 9:20 video on editing images in Photo Mechanic](#)



## Tips & Tricks

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Photo Mechanic has some other interesting features you can explore on your own:

1. Email photos directly from the app
2. FTP photos directly from the app
3. Export photos as web galleries
4. Apply GPS coordinates to photos for mapping.
5. Code replacement - a system for using codes for captioning. Popular with sports photographers who caption a lot of photos on very tight deadlines.

That's an overview of Photo Mechanic's basic functions for editing and organizing your photographs.

With a little practice it can be a great tool – you'll work faster. Which means more time for other things like taking more photos! (or playing video games, hanging with friends, sleeping or studying for other classes)