

# JOHN ARIFIN

## Inspiring others through awesome images

Professional nature and wildlife photographer and educator strengthens the moving power of his photographs with Adobe® Photoshop® Lightroom® 2.



A Singapore-based nature and wildlife photographer and educator, John Arifin travels across Asia in search of a perfect moment to freeze in time. John contributes photographs and story write ups to various regional magazines such as Asian Geographic, Asian Photography, Nature Watch, Asian Escape, Birds Australia – Wingspan, and Spa Asia. Highly passionate about his work, he regularly conducts photography courses and workshops in Singapore.



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Whether it's a Royal Bengal tiger with an impressive yawn or an eagle on the verge of flight – such excellent photographic opportunities don't come easily for photographers of Asian wildlife. This does not deter John, who remains committed to raising public awareness on Asian wildlife. "Wildlife in Asian jungles, especially the tropical rain forests remain largely unexplored, and my aim is to uncover such hidden beauty and share my photographic knowledge on nature with others, so that they can better appreciate and understand the natural world," he says. Such knowledge sharing has inspired people around John, even those who never had any interest in nature, to look at the natural world differently.

What is the key to John's success in creating such a profound impact on others? The answer lies in the moving power of his photographs and his expertise in imparting his knowledge to others. "My philosophy is get it right in the camera the first time, and you will spend less time behind the computer," John says.

However, he acknowledges that getting the perfect shot the first time is not always possible. Unlike African safaris where there is abundant wildlife in open areas, wildlife in thick Asian jungles is much harder to spot. Using a long telephoto lens, John's strategy is to be as prepared as possible, so that no opportunities for catching valuable

shots are lost. Many photos are taken during each shoot and only the best ones are selected for publication. In fact, John takes on average some 3,000 to 5,000 images for a seven-day trip in an Asian jungle.

#### **Efficient bulk photo volume management**

The workflow that John faces is highly demanding, as selected photos need to be filtered out from many RAW images, cataloged, sorted and touched up before print or uploading on his website. As the process is repeated daily, it will become a burden to the business if it cannot be performed quickly. In the past, finding the desired photo from the mass of RAW images for editing was very tedious and time-consuming for John.

Using Adobe® Photoshop® Lightroom® 2 (Lightroom) since its first release in 2006, John has been able to manage his work demands efficiently, while ensuring excellent image quality. Lightroom helps users streamline their digital photography workflow through ways such as sorting and finding selected photos faster, and targeting specific image areas for more precise adjustments.

With Lightroom's batch processing capability, John can quickly import large volumes of photos from cameras into the program and rename and organize digital images into folders and keywords.



#### **Customer** **John Arifin**

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#### **Challenges**

- Efficient management of bulk photo volumes
- Minimizing program switching between different workflow tools
- Meeting rigorous workflow demands

#### **Solution**

- Leveraged on Adobe Lightroom to efficiently manage batch processing and handle most photo editing functions
- Adobe Photoshop used to make special image adjustments
- Adobe InDesign used to further extend production process

#### **Benefits**

- More efficient delivery of photos to customers
- Improved visual impact of photos on viewers

#### **Toolkit**

- Adobe® Photoshop® Lightroom® 2



With Lightroom, metadata commands controlling areas such as color, exposure and tonal curves on various camera RAW file formats can be changed, without affecting the original image format.

*“Photoshop allows me to make special image adjustments, while Lightroom helps me to manage my image database as well as my digital workflow from image capture to print and web photo gallery. When used together, both Adobe products inspire me to think about what I want and can do with the image even before I press the shutter.”*

John Arifin, Photographer

In addition, Lightroom’s volume management feature shows at a glance on which drives images have been stored, as well as each drive’s connection status (online or offline) and remaining volume capacity. Even if a drive is offline, high-resolution previews of the images on it are retained for John to work with, whether he is in the office or out in the field. In the field he normally imports images into an external drive through Lightroom then backs-up the images onto a second external drive automatically to ensure that the images are intact.

**Preserving original image formats**

Lightroom also offers various tools for John to make a wide variety of image adjustments easily, anytime, anywhere. Powerful

metadata filters allow him to quickly sort and pick out the exact photos he wants for image editing. “Lightroom helps me to narrow down my photo choices much faster and easier than before,” John says.

Traditionally, chosen photos had to be edited one at a time, with resulting manipulation of pixels in the original images. With Lightroom, metadata commands controlling areas such as color, exposure and tonal curves on various camera RAW file formats can be changed, without affecting the original image format. For example, John can make and view changes to the lighting of a sunset shot without having to reset the image back to its original format if the changes are rejected later.

Because the metadata command can either be applied to the entire image or only specific parts of it, John has greater flexibility in dodging, burning, and making other local adjustments. “Lightroom’s most useful feature is its ability to adjust the metadata of images, eliminating the need to edit images directly where their original pixels would have been affected,” John says.

A photo collections panel follows John whenever he moves from one Lightroom section to another, allowing easy access to selected images in Lightroom’s image library no matter what section he works in. For example, John may use a Lightroom section to create a quick slideshow for his workshop presentations. While still in that section, he can directly pull out images from the image library to feature in the presentation.



For a recent exhibition on Incredible India @ 60, John had to select 70-80 photographs out of nearly 6,000 RAW images from his last few trips to the country.



### Meeting rigorous workflow demands with ease

John finds that Adobe Lightroom has been able to consistently meet any workflow challenges he may face. For example, for a recent exhibition on Incredible India @ 60, John had to select 70-80 photographs out of nearly 6,000 RAW images from his last few trips to the country. These photographs had to be touched-up, captioned and printed for the exhibition within a tight timeline of only two weeks. In addition, the selected photos had to be printed on different paper sizes without any compromise in image quality. Printing the photos alone would have been time consuming, taking at least several days for completion. However, John was able to quickly import the RAW photos into Lightroom, which helped him to easily select and edit the images, while meeting the print and quality requirements within the short time frame.

“Lightroom makes photo editing a breeze and has a easy learning curve for first time users,” John says. “With Lightroom, I can optimize the image by adjusting the image exposure slider, and the black slider to improve its clarity in seconds.”

Before using Lightroom, John had to manually resize and sharpen images to fit different paper sizes for print. With Lightroom’s smart sharpening feature, John now only needs to input the print

requirements for the RAW image and the program will handle the rest.

Before using Adobe products, John found himself frequently having to switch between various software programs to do different photo editing tasks. With Lightroom, frequent program switching is no longer necessary, improving editing efficiency. “About 90 to 95 percent of editing can be done using Lightroom, which minimizes program switching,” John says. “Lightroom also allows side by side comparison of images before and after adjustments.”

### Drawing up ideas from photo editing capabilities

With Lightroom, John has been able to more easily express his passion for nature through photography, as well as his desire for others to share in this passion. In the past for example, some students of John’s photography workshops often found it difficult to capture a scene in a way that best highlights the beauty of nature. Lightroom helps John to further enhance photos presented at his workshops so that his students can more easily understand what makes a great shot and how to maximize the camera and the rest of the workflow easily. As a result, the participants can better identify with his passion for the natural world by seeing it from a different perspective and applying this in their photographic experiences.



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