

# Non-Adobe Software Options



# Background

Perceived focus in WCC on Adobe to the exclusion of other options.

Huge expansion of software over last few years

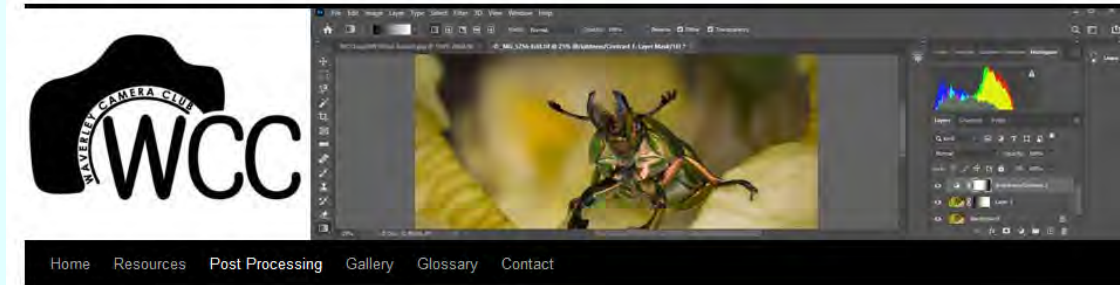
## WCC Resources Website

<https://resources.waverleycameraclub.org/>

- introduction: *today (GS and John Noble)*
- October workshop – Peter Eastway on *Capture One* followed by short overviews of some other software by several members (TBA).

*if any one wants to contribute, let me know.*

## WCC Resources



← How to do basic screen calibration

Basic Edits – exposure and contrast →

### Software

Posted on [August 10, 2020](#) by [Geoff Shaw](#)

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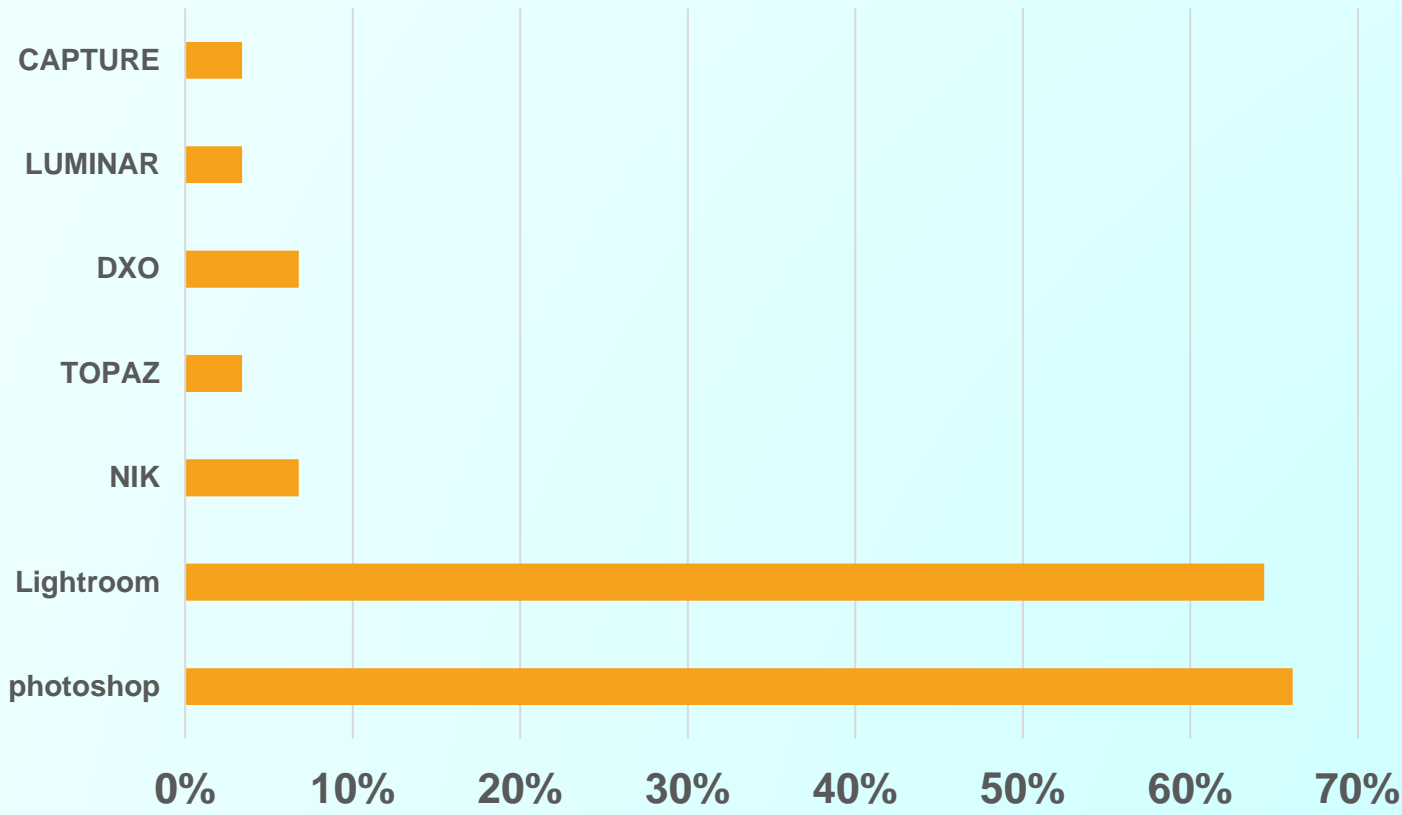
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### What software features to look out for

There are lots of packages available, some expensive/subscription, some free. All have pros and cons in terms of features and ease of use.

Tim Keane has made a brief comparison of Photoshop, Photoshop Elements, Lightroom

# WCC software use - 2018 survey. % of respondents



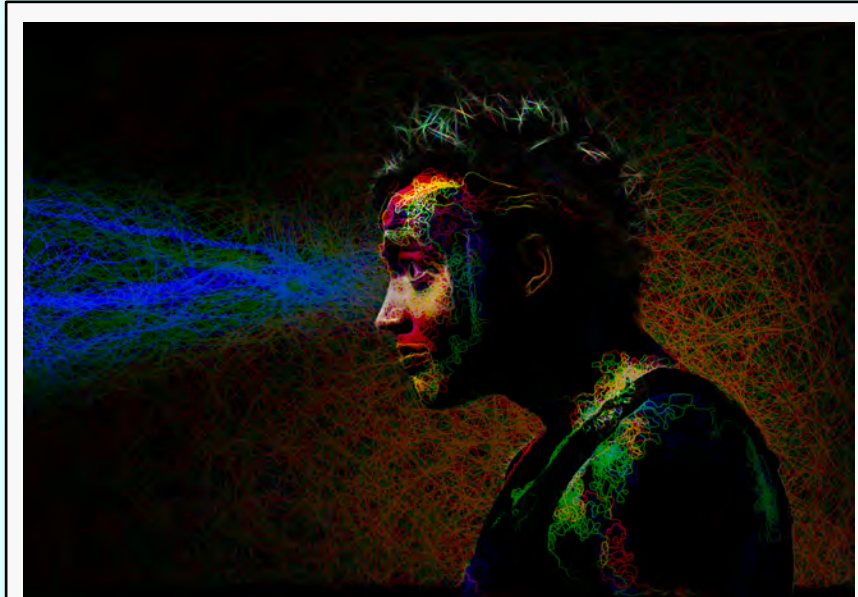
Similar results in a survey in 2020.

# **You will probably end up using more than one program**

- no program does it all
- each program has strengths and weaknesses
- different programming paradigms → different “looks”
- specialist programs → noise reduction / sharpening / HDR / stacking / colour management / astrophotography / portraiture .....
- new features (eg AI approaches)
- may use several programs to process a particular image

# This session

- What do you want from your image workflow software(s)
  - management of your images
  - processing of your images
  - output/presentation of your images
- John Noble's workflow
  - incorporates a range of software to achieve what he wants



*Custom programming, composited in PS*

*Processed in GIMP  
with G'MIC plugin*



*Processed in DxO Photo Lab 4*



# What do you want from your workflow software?

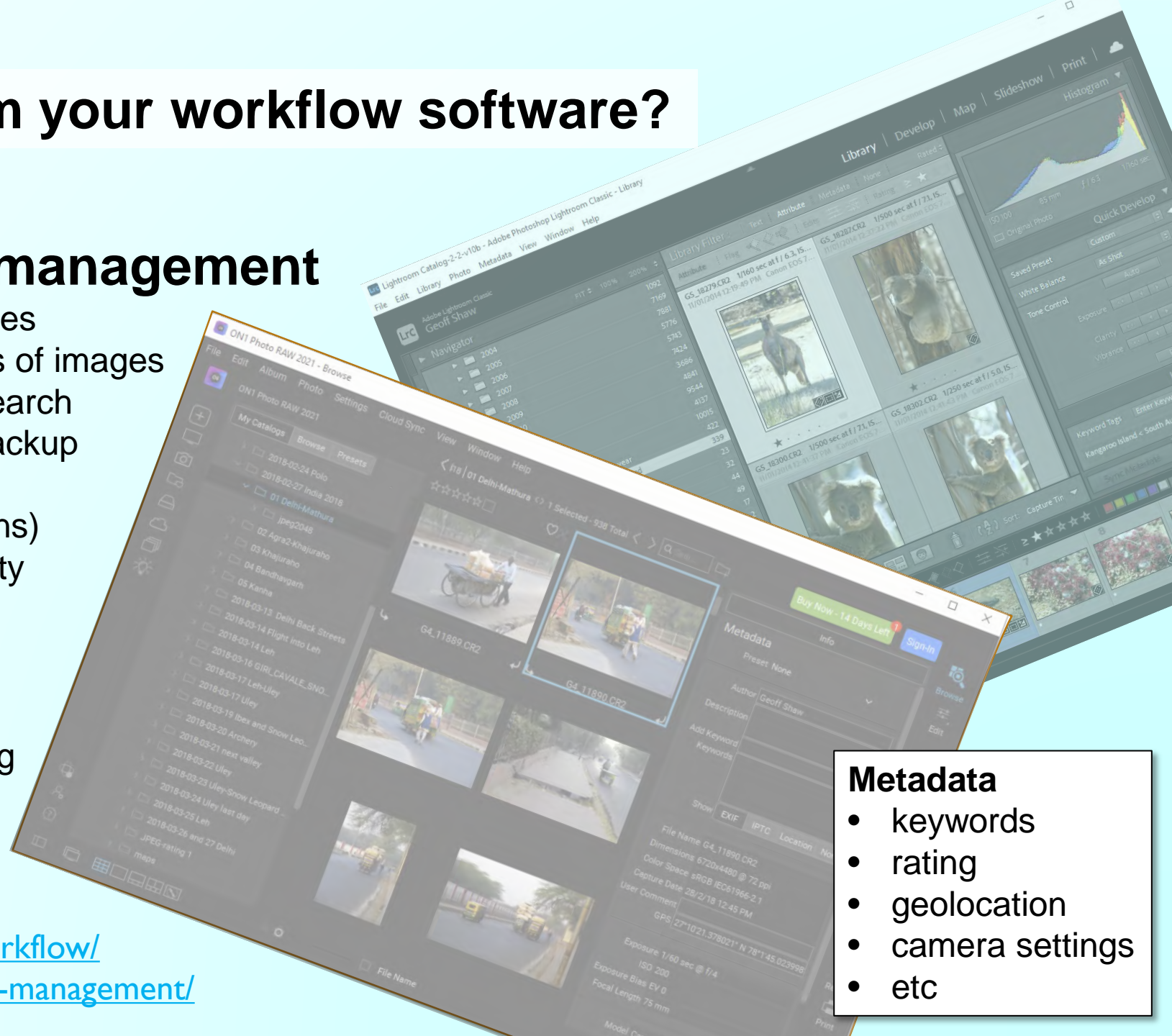
## DAM – digital asset management

- import and export image files
- browse images and folders of images
- rate, keyword/tag/index, search
- rename, move, remove, backup
- geolocation management
- virtual groupings (collections)
- wide file format compatibility

## Options

- all in one DAM and editing
- two apps 1. DAM, 2. editing
- do DAM manually

<https://resources.waverleycameraclub.org/workflow/>  
<https://resources.waverleycameraclub.org/file-management/>



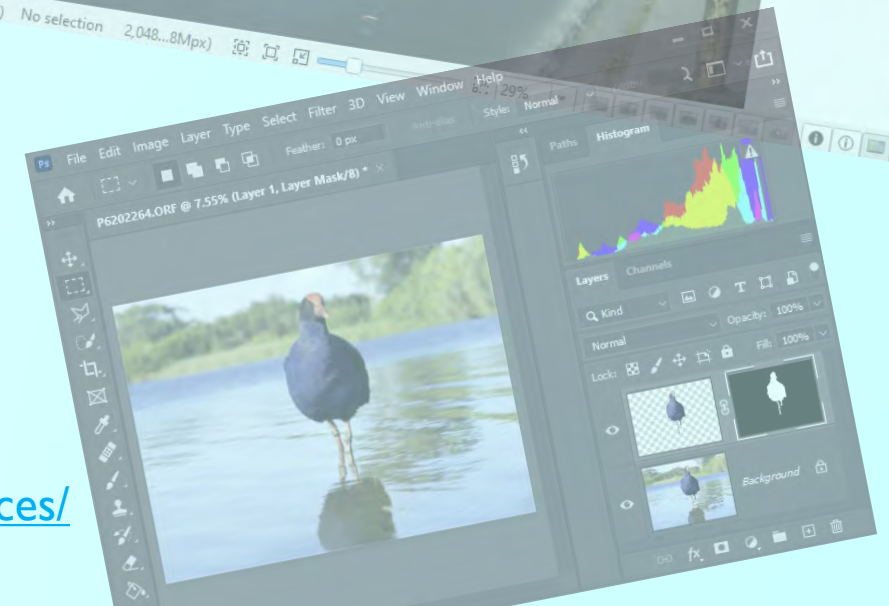
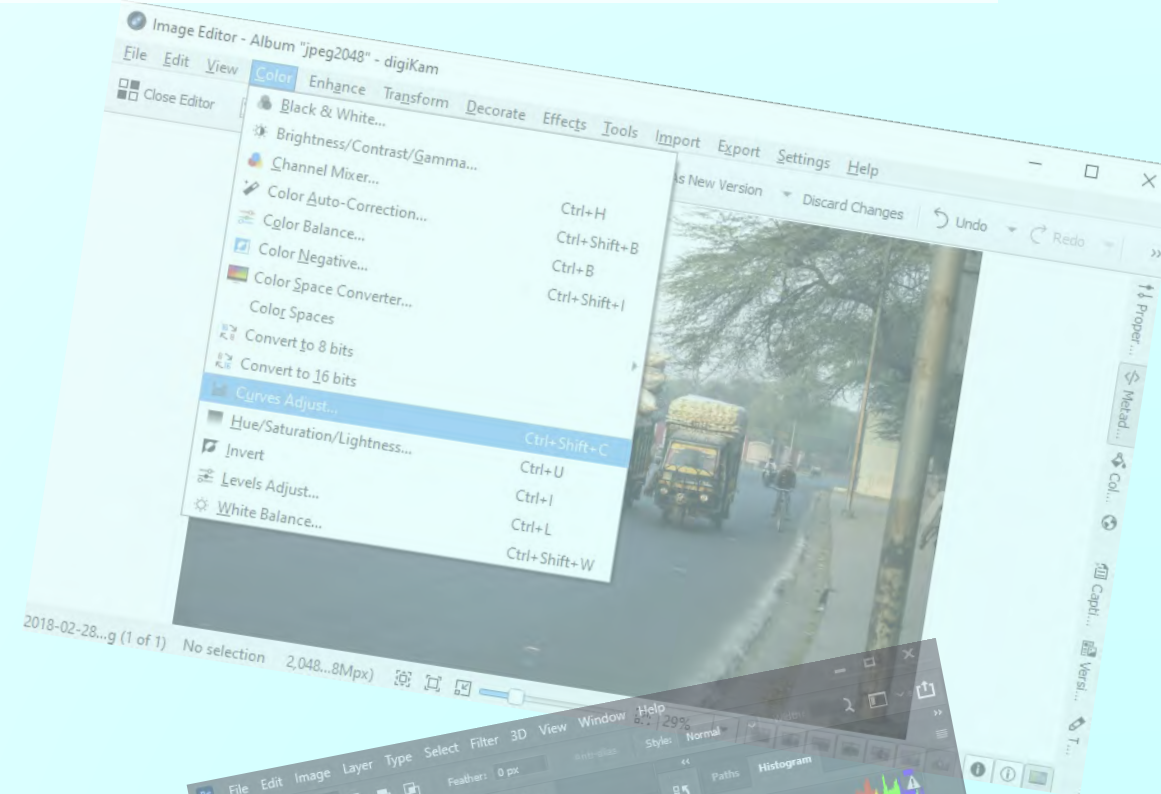
### Metadata

- keywords
- rating
- geolocation
- camera settings
- etc

# What do you want your software from your workflow software?

## Image processing

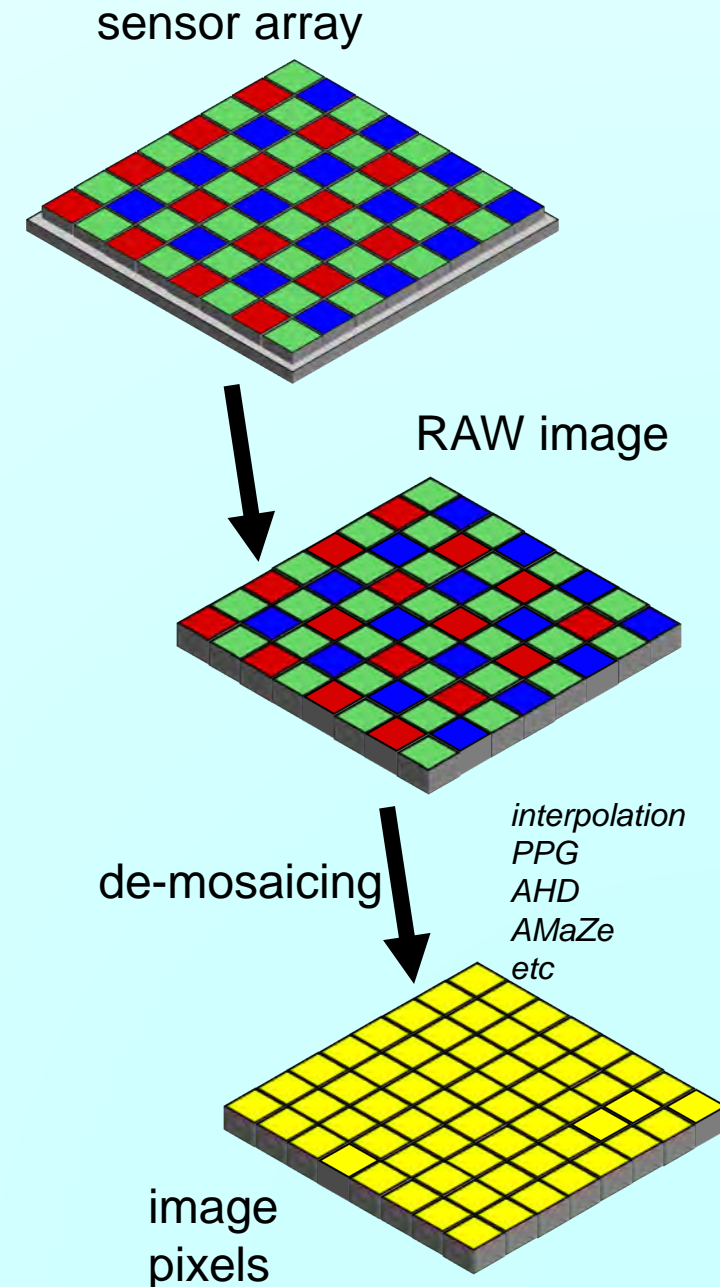
- RAW file processing
- non-destructive workflow
- extensive tools/filters
- local edits
  - gradients
  - paint brush
  - limits based on underlying image pixels (colour/brightness etc)
- colour management – camera → screen → print
- Photo merge (HDR, focus stack, panorama)
- compositing
- layers / masks / layer blending
- extensible (*plugins*)



# RAW File Processing

- Complex algorithms needed to convert digital sensor data to pixel array.
- Most packages provide excellent RAW file processing. There are some differences between Apps – try them out to see if you like what they offer.
- Applications may save RAW edit steps in a database or in a sidecar file, providing non-destructive workflow
- database / sidecar files are not 100% compatible between programs because of differences in the maths underlying the RAW processors in each App.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demosaicing>



# What do you want from your photography workflow software?

## Ease of use

- simple / intuitive to start
- comprehensive when you learn more features
- logical organisation of workspace
- ergonomic
- fast operation
- customisable
- abundant learning resources



## Reliable

- few or no crashes or glitches
- active development
- helpdesk / forum
- ideal: ability to transition to new software system without losing your DAM investment

## Compatibility

- Windows 10
- Mac OSX
- Linux
- other
- uses GPU to speed processing?

# Some options (not an exhaustive list)

<https://resources.waverleycameraclub.org/software/>

## Commercial

- Luminar 4 / AI
- DxO Photo Lab 4
- Nik collection
- Affinity Photo
- Topaz Studio 2
- Capture One
- ON1 Photo RAW
- Exposure X6
- PaintShop Pro

## Free

- GIMP
- Darktable
- Raw Therapee
- Krita
- Paint.net
- DigiKam
- Photopea

- lots of options
- many use similar approaches in
  - user interface
  - editing filters
- many can operate as plugins as well as stand-alone programs
- you may like different programs for
  - different features.
  - different ease of use
- be prepared to intermix programs in your workflow – no one program does everything perfectly for every image

- **capabilities**
- **power**
- **speed**

# Free vs Commercial

- Some excellent free software available
  - some have worse ergonomics vs commercial / steeper learning curve / less refined UI
  - documentation patchy for some
  - generally good support forums to solve any problems
  - may not have all the very latest whizz-bangery
  - some have very advanced features with ultra-fine control of advanced filters
  - some may be unstable on some platforms
- Some free software is more limited in capability
- Some free software has features/filters not available in commercial offerings. I use both commercial and free software in my processing
- Free software is a viable alternative to commercial offerings if you don't want to shell out \$\$\$

# Digital Asset Management

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have few images (eg &lt; 10,000), or</li> <li>• I have an alternative strategy for DAM eg <i>Adobe Bridge</i></li> </ul>                                       | <i>Photoshop</i><br><i>Topaz Studio</i><br><i>Affinity Photo</i>                                       | <i>GIMP</i><br><i>Raw Therapee</i><br><i>Krita</i><br><i>Photopea</i><br><i>Adobe Camera Raw (ACR)</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have a medium image collection (1,000-20,000) that does not grow fast, or</li> <li>• I don't need a comprehensive DAM in my image application</li> </ul>       | <i>Luminar</i><br><i>DxO Photo Lab</i><br><i>PaintShop Pro</i><br><i>Darktable</i><br><i>LightZone</i> | <i>Capture One</i><br><i>On1 Photo RAW</i><br><i>Exposure X6</i><br><i>Lightroom</i><br><i>DigiKam</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have a huge image library, or</li> <li>• I want a DAM to help me manage my images:<br/>tag, rate, sort, filter, find my images, automate backup etc</li> </ul> | <i>Capture One</i><br><i>On1 Photo RAW</i><br><i>Exposure X6</i><br><i>Lightroom</i><br><i>DigiKam</i> |  |

Don't neglect BACKUP! <https://resources.waverleycameraclub.org/backup/>

# Image Processing

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| I want powerful editing tools including local adjustments                                  | <i>Photoshop</i><br><i>Lightroom</i><br>Topaz Studio<br>Affinity Photo<br>Photopea<br>DxO Photo Lab<br>Capture One<br>Luminar | GIMP<br>Raw Therapee<br><i>Adobe Camera Raw (ACR)</i><br>Krita<br>Photopea |
| I want to combine different photos for textures, sky replacement, creative composites etc. | Luminar<br>Topaz Studio<br>Affinity Photo<br>OnI Photo RAW<br>Exposure X6<br><i>Photoshop</i>                                 | Krita<br>Photopea  |

<https://resources.waverleycameraclub.org/capturing-images-in-the-camera-raw-vs-jpeg/>

# Specialist programs / plugins

*Many functions including:*

- Noise reduction
- Sharpening
- Increase Resolution (eg huge prints)
- Merge Photos
  - panorama
  - HDR
  - focus stack
  - astrophotography
- Portraiture
- Colour grading / management
- “Artistic” treatments

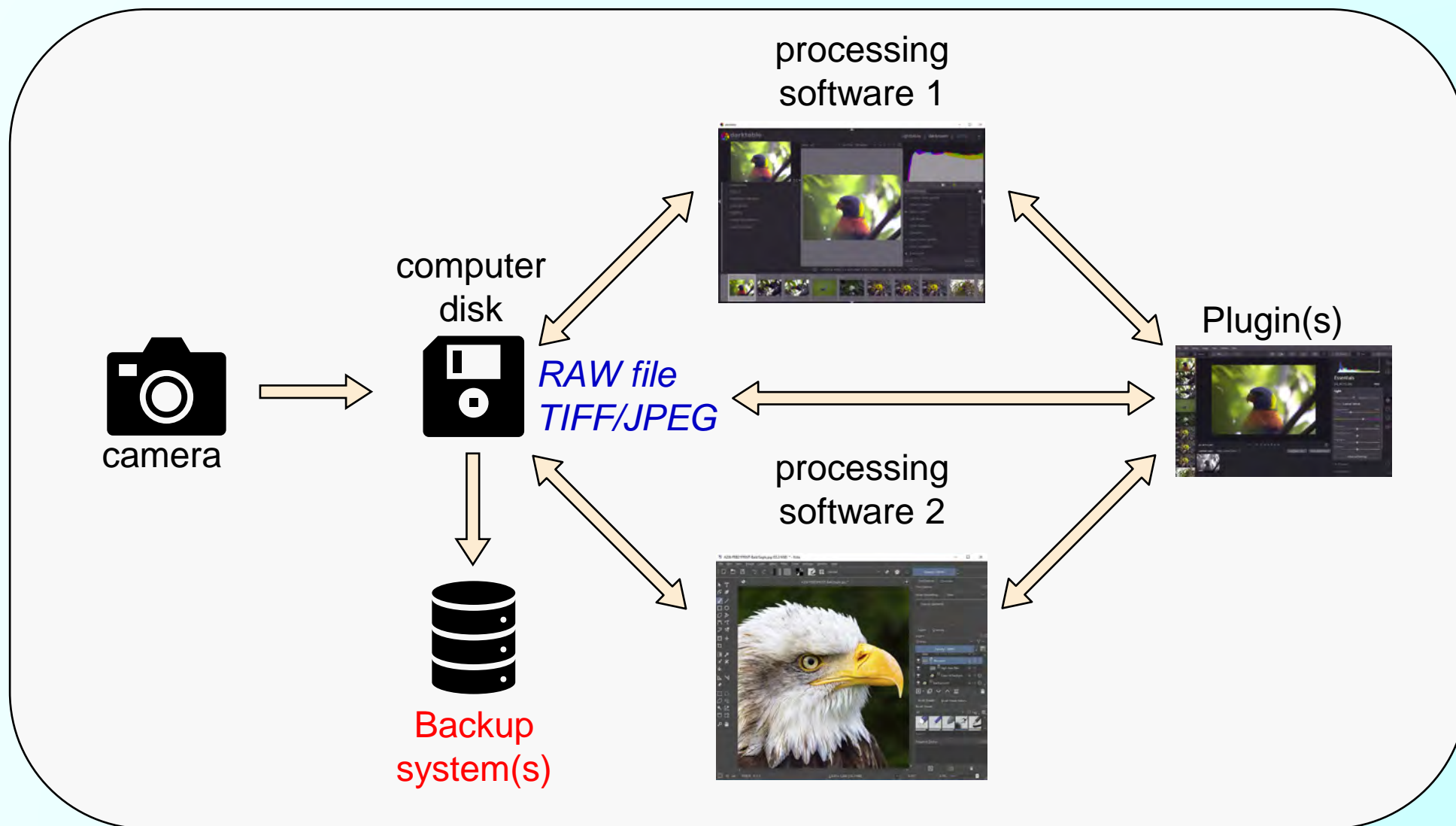
Huge variety available

Single purpose specialist applications

Many general purpose applications can also act as plugins, adding their strengths to other programs  
(eg Luminar, DxO, Topaz, Affinity etc. work as plugins)

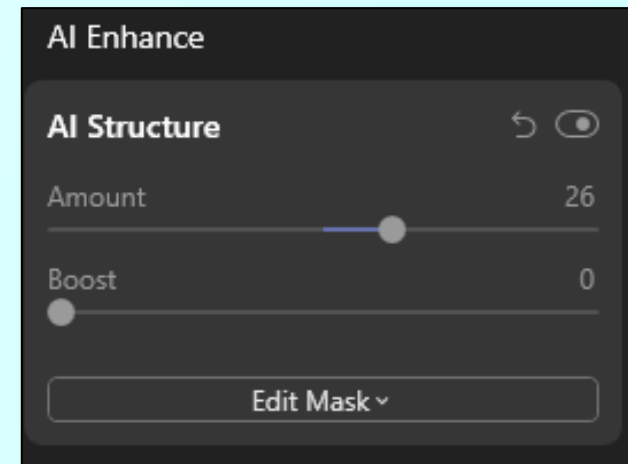
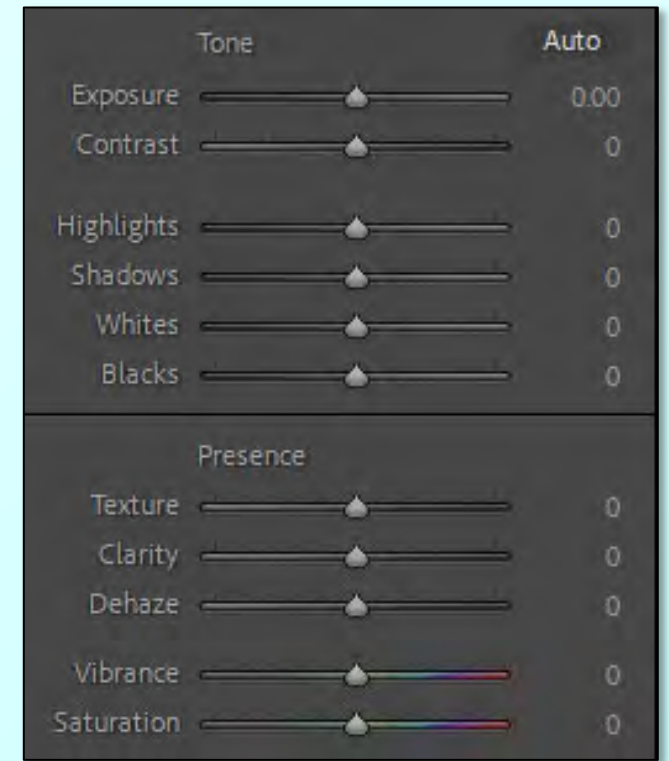
Includes many processing presets, LUTs, actions/scripts etc

# A workflow web



# Processing controls

- Parametric
  - examples of level of control
- AI
  - pros and cons



<https://resources.waverleycameraclub.org/basic-edits/>

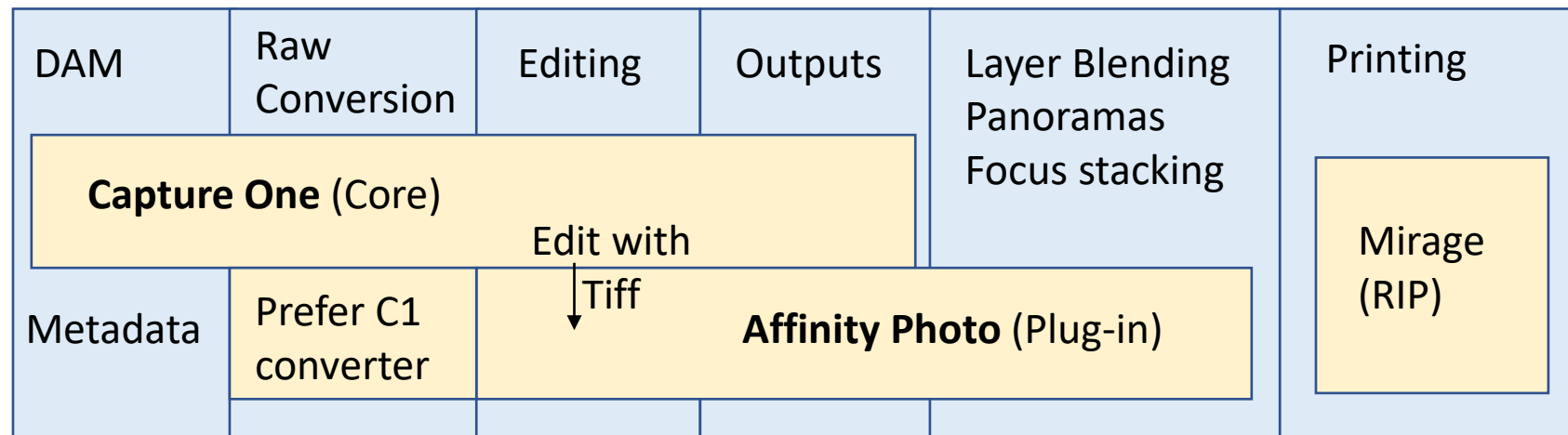
# **John Noble's Workflow**

# Finding my digital workflow

- Transitioned from film to digital early
- **NIKON** camera of choice; influenced by Nikon software
- ‘Dabbled’ wide range of photo editors
- Never felt comfortable with **Photoshop** (Brick Wall)
- Relied on custom file structures (dd/mm/yyyy\_Location/event)
- Now comfortable with a workflow that ticks all the boxes for me



# My Non-Adobe Digital Workflow

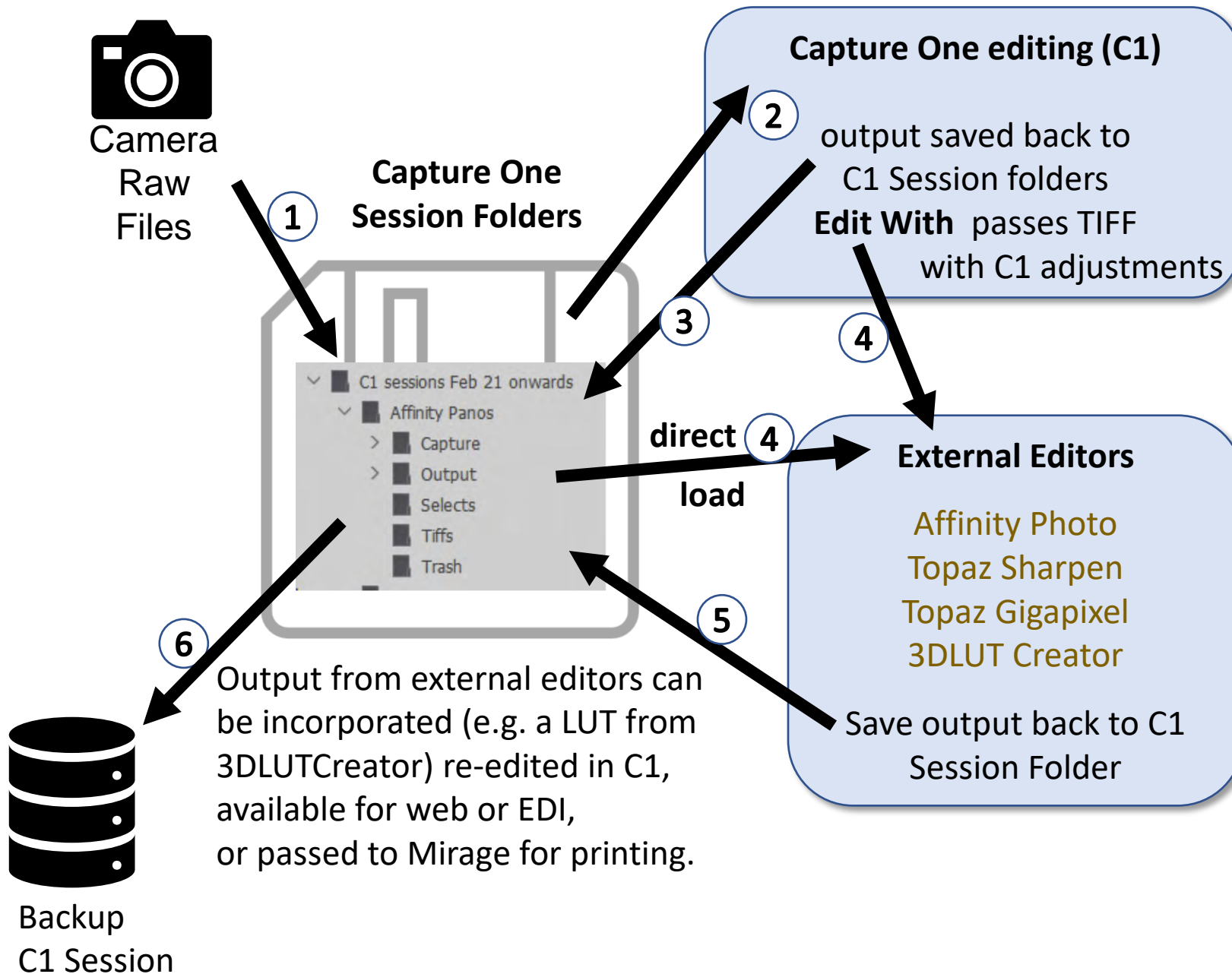


# My Workflow

For approximately 90% of my images I find ***Capture One*** provides all the tools I require.

Where I need more complex tools such as compositing or complex colour grading I call an external program to do those adjustments, then save outputs back into the ***Capture One*** library structure.

All changes are thus covered when moving or backing up a ***Capture One*** session.



## WORKFLOW STEPS

1. Download and **import** selected Raw files into C1 Capture folder
2. Raw **editing**, basic and advanced adjustments,
3. **Export** JPG or TIFF edited files to C1 subfolders
4. From within C1 call external editor passing adjusted TIFF for **specialised processing**
5. Export back into C1 subfolders. **Save edits** dependent on software project options
6. **Backup** C1 session (all files contained within C1 session structure)

# PROS

- Flexibility in incorporating other specialist software
- Found own comfort zone
- Tethered sessions with Capture One
- Avoid subscription model payment schemes
- Affinity Photo support – Workbook
- Truthfulness in colour editing
- Speed

# CONS

- Lack of seamless integration (not insurmountable)
- Affinity Photo not strictly non-destructive
- Need to cross reference Adobe tools/methodologies



# Questions for John

**Geoff's final comments**

# Some personal viewpoints

- Everyone is different
  - individual preferences
  - preferences may change as you learn
- DAM is important as well as editing
  - file search / indexing / **backup**
- AI tools can be interesting, but not always better than parametric tools
- Try out different programs ... most offer free trials
- Different Applications
  - different strengths
  - use in combination (plugins)

# Recommendations

- Discuss software and workflow with your WCC colleagues or other associates
- Read reviews (particularly from reputable sources)
  - <https://www.reviewgeek.com/93092/the-8-best-adobe-photoshop-alternatives/amp/>
  - <https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/buying-guides/the-best-photo-editing-software>
- Download free trial versions and try them out
  - try with some problematic images
  - is the software better in some respect(s)
  - could the software add to or replace your current workflow?
  - is any benefit cost effective?

## Tools

### Essentials

Enhance AI

Composition AI

Erase

Light

White Balance: As Shot

Profile: Luminar Default

Temperature 5912

Tint 29

25.00

Smart Contrast -13

Highlights 0

Shadows 0

Blacks & Whites

Curves

Structure AI

Color

Black & White

Details

Denoise

Landscape

My Template (edited)

...