

An Overview of Lightroom Classic Plug-Ins

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Lightroom Classic can use plug-ins from several third-party software vendors. You can purchase and install these plug-ins to do many different things with your images, such as: manipulate tones, convert to black and white, apply a classic film look, correct the perspective, add a frame, correct the colours, enhance the colours, shape the colours, add a glow effect to the edges in your image, sharpen your images, be bold, inject passion, and much more.

Plug-Ins

- **Nik Collection** <https://nikcollection.dxo.com/>
- **Topaz**, <https://www.topazlabs.com/>, including the very popular **Topaz Studio 2**, which is now free but unsupported <https://docs.topazlabs.com/other-apps/legacy>
- **Topaz Glow**, which is now a filter in Topaz Studio 2 (as described above), is a favourite app of mine. Years ago, IACC member Gilles Simard posted some of his images with the glow effect. Have a look: <https://www.deviantart.com/agilephotography/art/Goddess-660439309>
<https://www.deviantart.com/agilephotography/art/Still-Spilling-Blood-529793875>
<https://www.deviantart.com/agilephotography/art/Lightships-512348327>
- **ON1** <https://www.on1.com/>
- **DxO PureRAW** <https://www.dxo.com/dxo-pureraw/>, **DxO Viewpoint** <https://www.dxo.com/dxo-viewpoint/>, and **DxO Filmpack** <https://www.dxo.com/dxo-filmpack/>
- **Luminar (Neo)** <https://skylum.com/luminar>
- **Affinity Photo** <https://affinity.serif.com/en-gb/photo/>
- **Zerene** <https://www.zerenesystems.com/cms/home>
<https://www.zerenesystems.com/cms/stacker/docs/workingwithlightroom>. IACC member Bruce Smith has an online photo gallery of his focus stacked images. His gallery "The Beauty of Rocks" displays his rock images with the best ones/most recent ones in the last pages. <https://www.brucesmith.ca/The-Beauty-Of-Rocks>
- **Color Checker Passport**, formerly X-Rite, now sold by Calibrite. I like the video by Glyn Dewis <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIEHD4p773s>. The Calibrite website is <https://calibrite.com/us/product/colorchecker-passport-video-2/>
- Jeffrey Friedl **Lightroom Goodies** (donationware) <http://regex.info/blog/lightroom-goodies>
- **Adobe** has its own list of third-party plug-ins <https://helpx.adobe.com/ca/lightroom-classic/plug-ins.html>

There are many more plug-ins to choose from. I found some websites that list "the best" LrC plugins but they were dated and wanted you to sign up for something.

Installation Procedures

Installation procedures will vary. Some plug-ins will install themselves when you install the stand-alone version of the software, such as the Nik collection and the DxO products. For some other plug-ins, you have to use the *Add* button in the Plug-In Manager panel, such as Jeffrey Friedl's Lightroom Goodies. *Library or Develop Module --> File --> Plug-in Manager*.

You can run Affinity Photo as a plug-in if you add it to the External Editing panel, *Library or Develop Module -> Preferences -> External Editing* and set it up as your second editor
<https://forum.affinity.serif.com/index.php?/topic/42467-affinity-photo-as-a-plugin-for-lightroom/>.

Always follow the software vendor's installation instructions for the best results.

Using your Installed Plugins

Your installed plug-ins and extensions can appear in a few different places in LrC.

1. *Develop Module -> right-click -> Edit in*.
2. *Develop or Library Module -> File Menu -> Plug-In Extras*.
3. Export panel.

More Information

- I personally like the Nik collection and the DxO products. The Nik Collection and all DxO products have a free 30-day trial. Other plug-ins such as the Color Checker Passport are free when you purchase their hardware device. Be sure to check the vendor's website to see what the current **free trial period** is.
- Some plug-ins usually need you to send them a tiff file. The plug-in will edit the tiff file and create an updated tiff or dng file. **The edited tiff or dng file is added to the folder where your original file is located** and sometimes it will be put into a stack with the original file. If you don't see your new photo right away, look for a new stack and open the stack. Also watch out for the sort sequence. Sorting by file name usually shows the new image that came back from the plug-in next to the original file.
- In the **External Editing** panel, *Library or Develop Module -> Preferences -> External Editing*, you can **specify two apps that will appear at the top of your Edit In pop-up list**.

Advantages of LrC Plugins vs. the Standalone Apps

Some plugins, such as Nik 6 Silver Efex and DxO FilmPack 7, have a standalone version as well as a LrC plug-in.

The plug-ins have a few advantages such as:

- The edited file is automatically saved in the same folder as your original image, it is **automatically added to your LrC catalog**, sometimes it will be stacked with the original file, sometimes it will be displayed in the filmstrip and grid view next to the original file (depending on the sort sequence). You can use the usual LrC features (compare view and survey view) to see how the edited file (from the plug-in) looks compared to the original file (that has only your LrC adjustments).
- You can **add a keyword** to indicate which app was used to create the image.
- You can **rate the image** (flags and stars) for future LrC searches using filters and smart collections.
- With at least some plug-ins, such as Nik Silver Efex, all of the **metadata from the original file is included** in the edited file. This allows you to search the LrC catalogue for metadata such as the date/time taken, exposure data, etc. This type of search will find the original file and the files created by the plug-ins.