**What is the best file format to save your photos in?**

 RAW \*PSD\*TIFF\*JPEG\*GIF\*PNG \*DNG

As a photographer you shoot in raw or jpeg may be both at the same time, then you edit, now there are many editing software programs, but usually the norm is the Adobe Photoshop Family; Elements, CS series and Lightroom.

**What do you do?** Do you save as a PSD, Tiff, Jpeg, Gif and Png or something else?

This address is not about how to save raw files or formats like DNG(digital Negatives); it is meant to focus on how you save to share on the web or for printing.

**Common Formats**

**PSD**

1. You will want to save as a Photoshop PSD when you have many layers that you want to preserve.
2. Saving this way will retain adjustment layers, your masks, shapes, clipping paths, layer styles and blending modes.
3. Useful if you need to maintain transparency.
4. PSDs are often large in size, if you edit with many layers.
5. Only certain programs will be able to see them; this differs from software to software.
6. You may need to save in a different format for printing i.e. professional lab.
7. You cannot display this format on the web.

**Tiff**

1. This targeted format is the highest quality file format and is excellent for print as there is no loss in quality.
2. Retains information in layers, depending how you save it.
3. Lossless format, so you will retain information from your images as you open and resave.
4. The DOWN side, the files are extremely large.
5. You cannot display on the web.

**Jpeg**

1. The Joint Photographic Experts Group (jpeg) is the most common file worldwide; it is viewable by all also used for printing and for use on the web.
2. You decide for yourself what size you save; level 01 is the lowest-12 is the highest.
3. Can be used on the web as it is.
4. DOWN side, when all layers are flattened upon saving you lose the ability to go back to past edits, I recommend that you duplicate the original before working on a jpeg.
5. Jpeg format is lossy; each time you open and save, the image compresses and you will lose a small amount of information.

Jpeg is used by many, do not be put off by other people saying you should be doing this or that, if it works for you fine you do not have to go the extra mile. The difference is so minor unless you re-opening many times’ I recommend that you make a copy (duplicate) and work on that for minor manipulation.

**PNG**

1. The Portable Network Graphics format: - Creates a smaller file but without the loss of a GIF.
2. Useful if you need to maintain transparency.
3. Often used for graphics instead of GIF.
4. Lossless format so you will retain information from your images as you reopen and save.
5. You can share these on the web.

**GIF**

1. The graphics Interchangeable Format: - This is good for web graphics with animation.
2. The file is very small so it loads fast on the web.
3. Lossless format so you will keep all the information from your images as you reopen and save.
4. Downside: - Limited colours and does not handle photographs well.
5. NOT recommended for photographs.

**PEF: -** is just one of the many of existing raw formats. This diversity has resulted in numerous software compatibility problems, because each format has its own parameters. Camera manufacturers introduce their own raw formats. Worse still, formats differ even within a single brand, and each new generation of cameras requires an update

**What is DNG?**

DNG (Digital Negative) is an open standard format introduced by **Adobe**. DNG still contains RAW data from the camera sensor, but is not camera dependent. Camera RAW files can be converted to DNG format, but not vice versa. Some newer cameras support DNG as their RAW format (e.g. Pentax K-7), while others (like Leica and Hasselblad use it as their native RAW format).

**Benefits of using DNG format**

**Compatibility** – DNG is supported in all **major photo editing tools** and works well with any Adobe tool out of the box. That means that you do not have to worry if your camera is supported by the newest release of Photoshop, Lightroom, or any other editing tool.

File management – DNG allows for storing data about photo and metadata modifications in the DNG file itself. That means, 1 photo – 1 file. I saw people on the forums stating that in that case the original image is destroyed. That is wrong, as modifications to the photo are recorded in the metadata section, so the original RAW data inside the DNG file is unchanged.

**RAW Defined**

RAW file format is the uncompressed, unprocessed data file captured by the camera's image sensor, before any in-camera processing has been applied (though, in practice, depending on the camera manufacturer, some minimal in-camera processing may have been applied to the RAW data). In this sense, an image saved in the RAW file format is the digital equivalent to the (exposed but as yet unprocessed) film negative.

In fact, the camera will ignore your white balance, sharpening, contrast and saturation settings. Instead of applying them to the RAW data, it will save those settings in a separate header associated with the RAW data.

Acknowledgement’s: - http:// digital-photography-school.com