

## ADDING COPYRIGHT INFORMATION TO IMAGES BY MICHAEL SMYTH

*Copyright exists on all photographs, but unless you stipulate that you are the owner of the image, you may or may not have any protection against unlawful use of your intellectual property.*

### INTRODUCTION

Copyright law is complex and varies from country to country. There are also areas where your rights may be superseded by publication agreements, especially in the thorny area of social media and the internet. Some countries blatantly abuse copyright, so you may not have any protection anyway, but by taking some simple steps you can at least provide some level of protection for your images.

Here are some ways you can apply copyright information to your images and minimise theft of your intellectual property.

### APPLYING COPYRIGHT TO METADATA

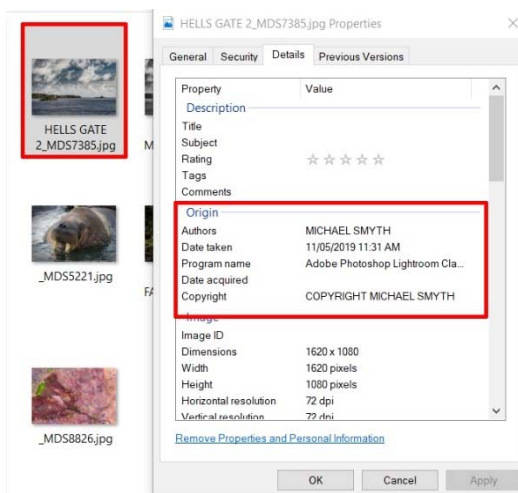
All cameras have the capacity to store user information with the metadata. The way you set this up varies from manufacturer to manufacturer, as does the terminology, but you should be able to add this automatically to every image. To ensure you have maximum protection, use the following wording:

***" Copyright Your Name 2020 All Rights Reserved"*** Where Your Name is actually your full name.

There is an excellent video by Steve Perry on adding Copyright information here:

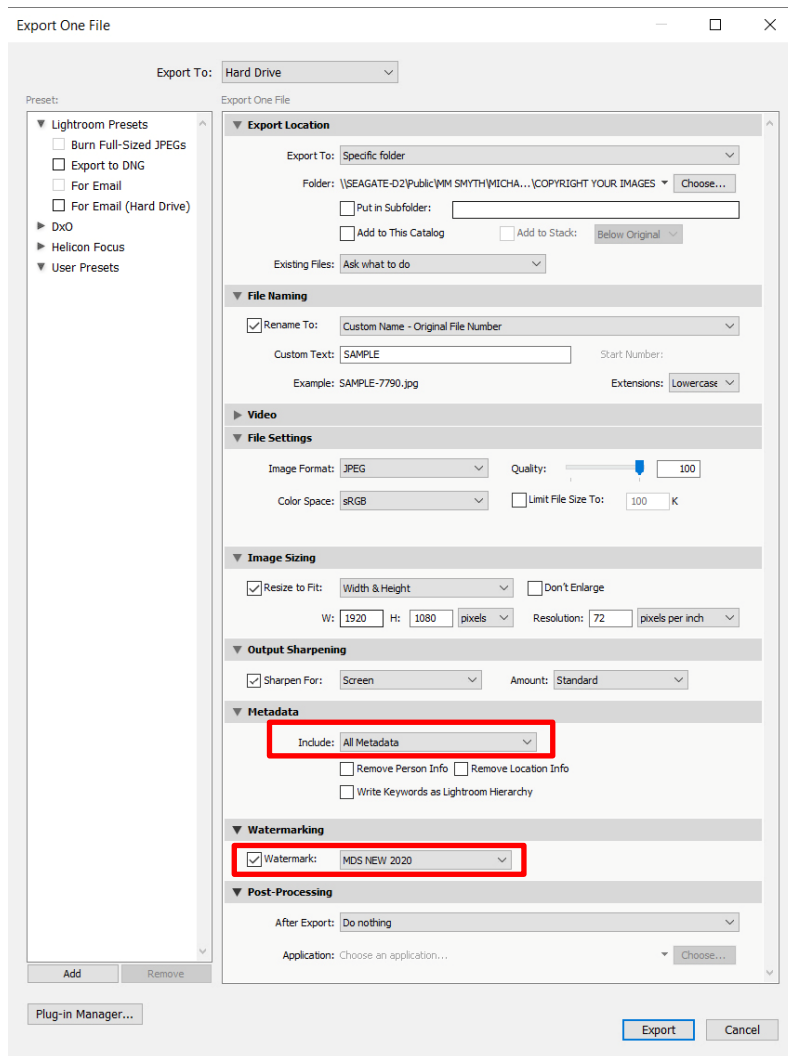
<https://backcountrygallery.com/how-to-add-copyright-information-in-camera/>

It is important when exporting files for the web and other uses to ensure that you leave the metadata intact. An exported JPEG file should be able to be examined to reveal the ownership information from within Windows Explorer or the Finder on a Mac. When uploading to the web, this metadata may be lost, so a better option is to add a watermark directly to the image.



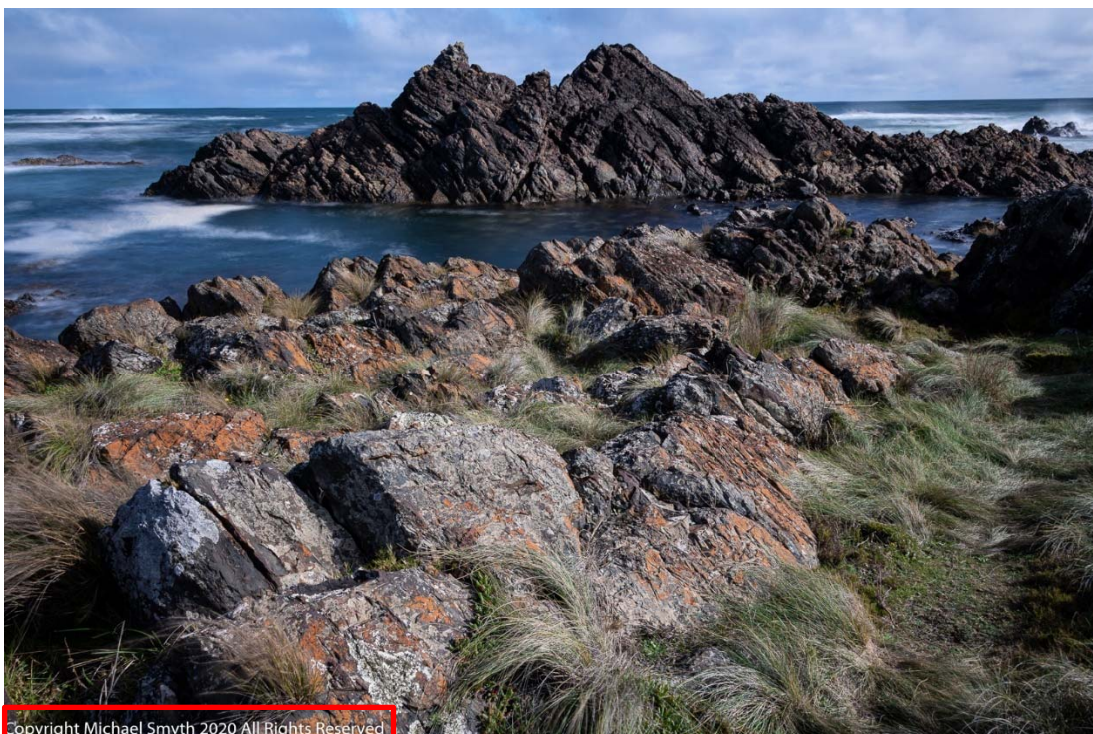
**Above:** simple copyright information embedded within an image file.

If exporting a JPEG from Lightroom, you have options for retaining and adding copyright information. In the Export dialogue, ensure you leave the Metadata intact and add a Copyright watermark.



**Left:** The Lightroom Export dialogue box. Ensure you keep the metadata and add a watermark. Watermarks can be added or created directly from the export dialogue box.

Clicking on the drop down box in the Copyright panel opens an option to "Edit Watermarks". Here you can modify and create several different versions for different applications.



**Above:** An image after export with the Copyright watermark added.



## WATERMARKING YOUR IMAGES

When using Photoshop, you can create a standalone text image that can be added to any image before going to "Save As" and save as a JPEG file.

*Copyright Michael Smyth 2020 All Rights Reserved*

**Above:** A Copyright text saved as a separate image (.PSD) file. This can be placed anywhere on an image and scaled to suit. Also, using the "Fill" option you can reduce the opacity of the white text whilst still retaining the stroke and drop shadow. The text is created on an empty layer.



**Above:** An image saved from Photoshop with the Copyright layer added and blended to suit.

A quick check of images published on the web and downloaded reveals that in a lot of cases the metadata is not saved. The best option therefore is to embed the watermark in the image itself, as above and not rely solely on the embedded Metadata.

## NEVER PUBLISH FULL RESOLUTION IMAGES ONLINE, EVER

It is important to ensure that you never upload or send full resolution files to the web or to other persons without ensuring that the image is not going to be used without your permission. I recently had an image that was published online used to make a print for a third party. Fortunately, I know the third party well and was shown the printed image, which was printed at A4 size and was terrible. I was able to make a print for this person myself, but the lesson is, if you only upload low resolution images, they are not going to be much use for anyone to "steal".



Once an image is published online, especially on social media, you may have revoked ownership of it anyway (you may need to read the 1,000 plus pages of their user agreement to find out – nobody does), so if it is only a low res version, it won't really matter.

Images published on the Phototutor website are all less than HD resolution – 1920 x 1080 pixels, and usually resized to around 1500 x 1000 or less for publication. Using any of these images from the web you would only be able to make a small print, so theft is not really a concern.

### **AVOID COMPETITIONS WHERE “THEY” OWN THE IMAGES**

There have been numerous examples of so called “competitions” that offer a seemingly worthwhile prize in either cash or equipment, but where in the fine print it turns out that you are ceding ownership of the image to the organiser. So, before you enter any of these competitions, weigh up how much you think your image is worth to you. If you win the big prize, it may be worth it, but usually they want ownership of all entries, so it is a cheap way of obtaining a lot of images at little or no cost.

So, you could enter and not win, but lose ownership of your “prized” image in the process.

### **SUMMARY**

The internet and the wider world is full of unscrupulous people who may appropriate your images for their own use. You may not be able to avoid theft, but you can take steps to hopefully ensure you have some protection and rights when you see your favourite image on the side of a bus advertising some thing or other. You have been warned.



**Above:** Don't let someone steal your images !

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