

(Approx. 631 words)

Book Review – The Digital Negative  
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The Digital Negative  
*By Jeff Schewe*

If you've been involved in photography for a lot of years, the title of this book may ring familiar. That's because it was named as an homage to a work by Ansel Adams titled 'The Negative', originally published in 1955. Ansel also wrote 'The Camera' and 'The Print', of which Jeff has reworked the last title into another homage title, 'The Digital Print'.

This volume brings you the most comprehensive look at how a digital camera produces its negative, otherwise known as the RAW file. Rather than being based on physical film emulsion and base, it is a purely digital image, living life as a collection of bits in a file on your computer. Nonetheless, it is just as important as the film negative in how it stores and presents your images to the world.

The volume is divided into six highly detailed chapters, covering topics ranging from what a digital negative is, to developing an efficient workflow to speed your image processing:

Ch. 1: What is a digital negative?

Ch. 2: Adobe RAW Image Processing: An Overview

Ch. 3: Fundamentals of Lightroom and Camera RAW

Ch. 4: Advanced RAW Processing using Lightroom or Camera RAW

Ch. 5: Deploying Photoshop to Perfect your Digital Negatives

Ch. 6: Creating an Efficient Workflow

Don't let the small number of chapters fool you: this book packs 312 pages full of content, from sample images and screenshots to tips and insights into how best to process your images.

If your camera supports shooting in RAW format, you would be better off using it to make your images than the JPEG option. JPEG gives you a smaller file size, but at the expense of losing a lot of image detail and data. RAW gives you the most image data your camera can produce, and will allow you to make your images the highest quality you could want, especially if you are trying to make a living selling your photography.

Author Schewe gives many detailed examples of how best to deal with different image types, from blown-out skies to sharpening for maximum effect.

The early chapters deal with what a digital negative is, how it is created, and some other technical details...but all of which are written in easy to understand language. Following this comes a look at Camera RAW and Lightroom, and explores the controls and functionality of each as related to RAW image editing. I don't think there was a control or option that was missed from either application and, again, it's in easy to read language.

The chapter on Photoshop is included as three ARE times when you need the extra power and capabilities not present in Camera RAW and Lightroom to fine-tune your images. Finally, chapter six takes a look at Jeff's workflow, from ingestion of the RAW images to archiving and outputting the finished image. It can give you a look at what you're doing, and how to improve it to be more efficient.

If you're looking for a good background primer on the Digital Negative and how and what a RAW file is, this is the volume you've been waiting for. It gives you the information you need to produce the best images you can from your digital camera, and does so in a way that you won't find intimidating or confusing.

'The Digital Negative' is published by Peachpit Press ([www.peachpit.com](http://www.peachpit.com)), and is available either in print form (\$39.99 list) or eBook format (\$31.99 list). You can find them also on Amazon.com, or you can order from Peachpit and use your UG discount code. The print ISBN is 978-0-321-83957-2 and the eBook ISBN is 978-0-13-306436-0.

