Batch File Renaming
by Phil Russell

You upload your digital still pictures into your Mac. What are the files named? Probably: DSC00047.JPG,DSC00048.JPG, or something like that (Fig. 1). The first thing I want to do is identify these photos with the event, for example, NewName, which they depict. For example, we could Batch Rename these files 01NewName.jpg, 02NewName.jpg, etc.

We will be Batch Renaming, since if you only had one file to rename, you would do it manually.
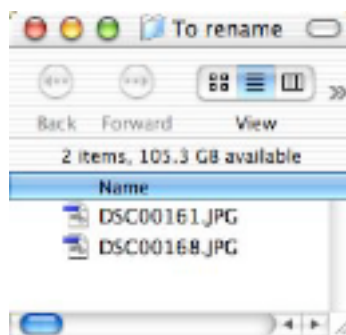

Fig. 1. Unrenamed files

As long as we are Batch Renaming images, and not word processing files or folders, Photoshop 7 is one way to rename your files.

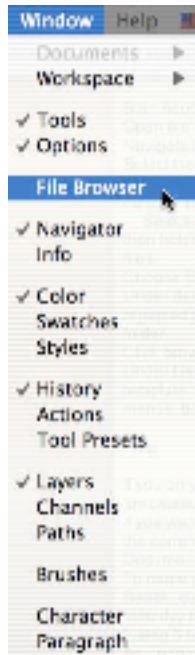Start Adobe Photoshop. Open File Browser from Window menu (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. Open File Browser

Navigate to the folder with files you want to rename (Fig. 3).

Select the files by choosing an entire folder of images, or select individual files by Command-clicking them, or Shift-clicking adjacent images.
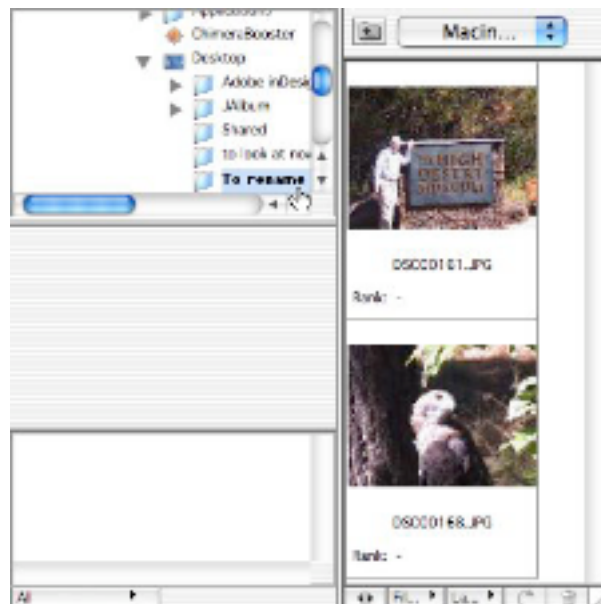

Fig. 3. Select images to rename

Choose Batch Rename... from the File Browser palette menu (the little

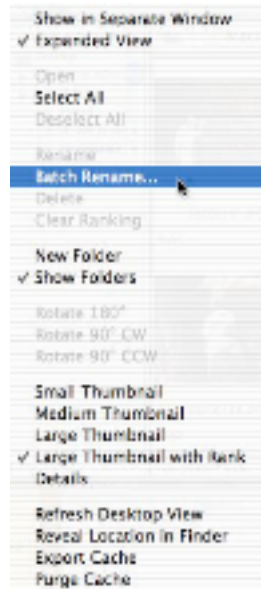right facing arrow to the right of the word File Browser) (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4 Choose Batch Rename...

Under file naming, use the fields to create a file naming template (Fig. 5). Common choices are provided in the dropdown menus, but you can also type custom text in the fields.
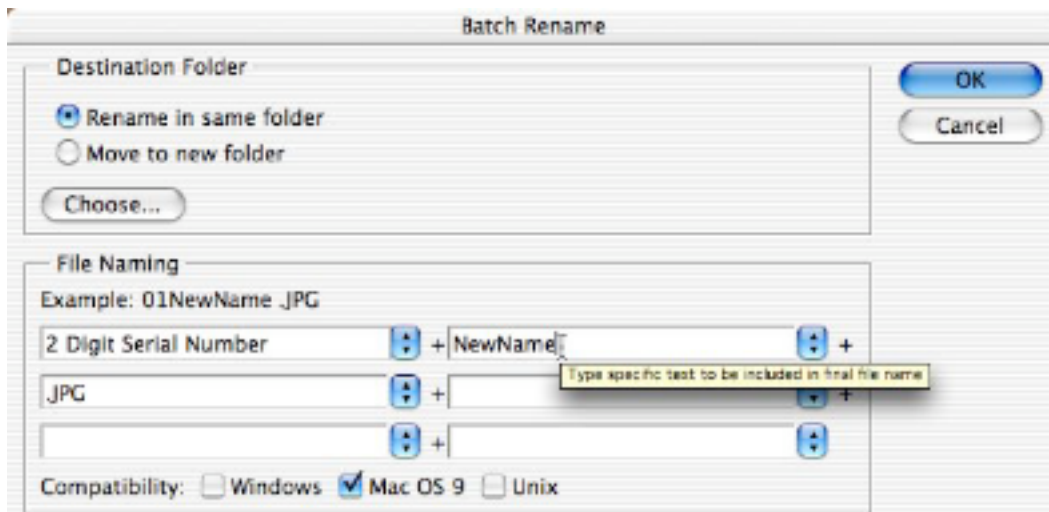

Fig. 5. File Rename dialog

In the example above, I selected "2 Digit Serial Number" from the popdown dialog. Then I used NewName for my new name in the next available File Naming blank. I typed .JPG into the third box.

When I clicked OK in the Batch Rename dialog, the files were renamed

with a two digit number, followed by the new name I typed in, ending in .JPG (Fig. 6).
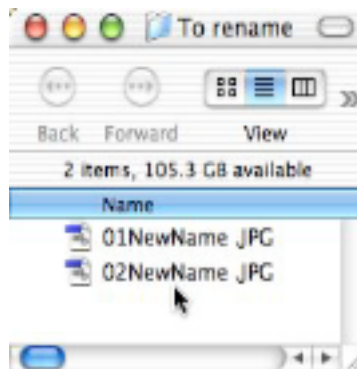

FIG. 6. Renamed files

Here are some ticks to help you with image renaming.
        • If you only want to change the files from uppercase to lowercase, you would enter: document name + extension. This means you use the popdown menu and select "document name" (without the "" marks). It does not mean type the existing title, and selecting it in lower case produces the correct change. Here are some of the choices available in each renaming popdown (Fig. 7).
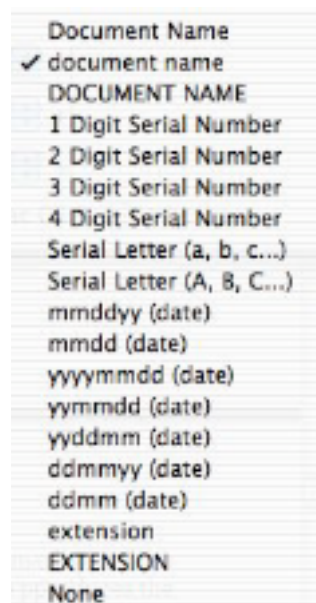

Fig. 7. Renaming choices

If you want to keep the existing filename, but precede it with the current date, you would enter: mmddyy (date) + Document Name + extension.

Remember, you do not type them in, just choose them from the popdown menus.

To name your files something like Beach_currentdate_01.jpg, you would enter: Beach_ + mmddyy (date) + _ + 2 Digit Serial Number + extension (using 5 Renaming fields).

An undocumented feature lets you specify the starting number for a series. Surround the starting number with # signs. For example: #049# = 3 digits starting at 49, #15# = 2 digits starting at 15, etc. You would type the #number# you choose in the first renaming box.

If you want a space or a period (.) anywhere, use a renaming box and type in a space or a period.

If File Renaming demands that you include certain choices from the original image name (Fig. 8), using document name is one way to make the change occur. It requires some playing with to understand to make the exact renaming change you wish.
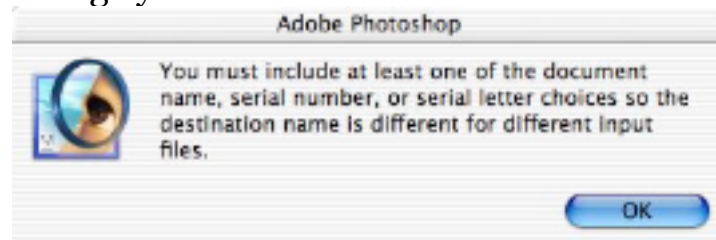

Fig. 8 Error message

If you want to make more dramatic changes to your image files, do not have Photoshop 7, or if you want to Batch Rename other items, such as folders or word processing documents, you may want to download a shareware file rename application, such as A Better Finder Rename ($14.95) at http://www.publicspace.net/ABetterFinderSeries/index.html.

You place an alias of A Better Finder Rename on your Desktop, or in DragThing. Drop a folder of files, or selected (Command-clicked) files onto the alias. You get the dialog box (Fig. 9).

Please note that this screen dump was taken BEFORE I paid the shareware fee. I have already sent in my payment, since this is a valuable tool for me. I had to have an OS X renaming tool, and this is my choice.

The option to add a number before the name is the choice which appears in this example.
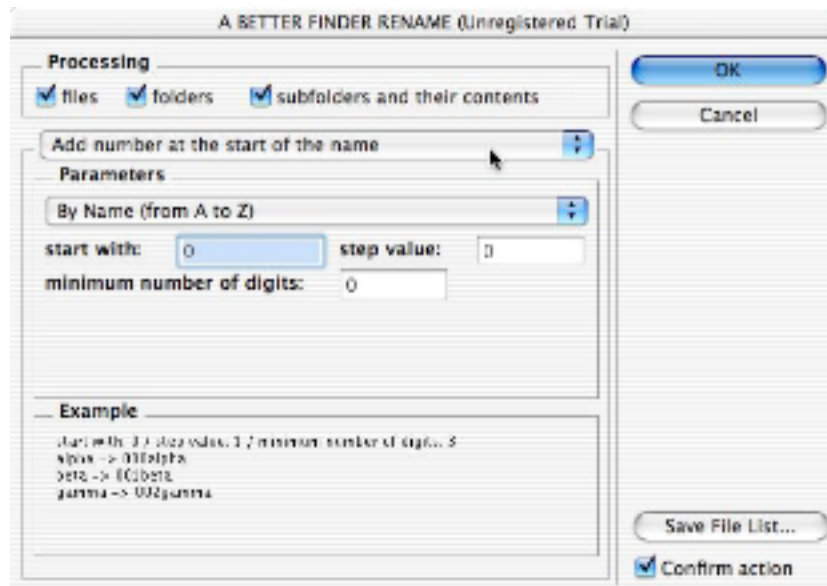
Fig. 9. A Better Finder Rename dialog

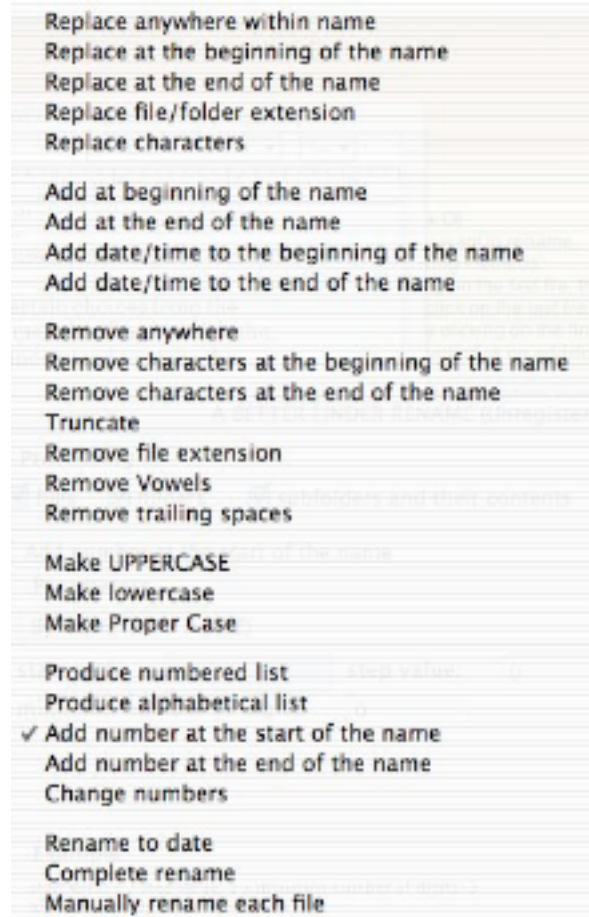However there are a lot more options you can choose here (Fig. 10).

Fig. 10. Better Finder Rename options

I will not go through all the options listed in Fig. 10. But you will find A Better Finder Rename has more options and is less finicky than the Photoshop 7 Batch Rename. As you can see, A Better Finder Rename has a very complete list of renaming options.

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