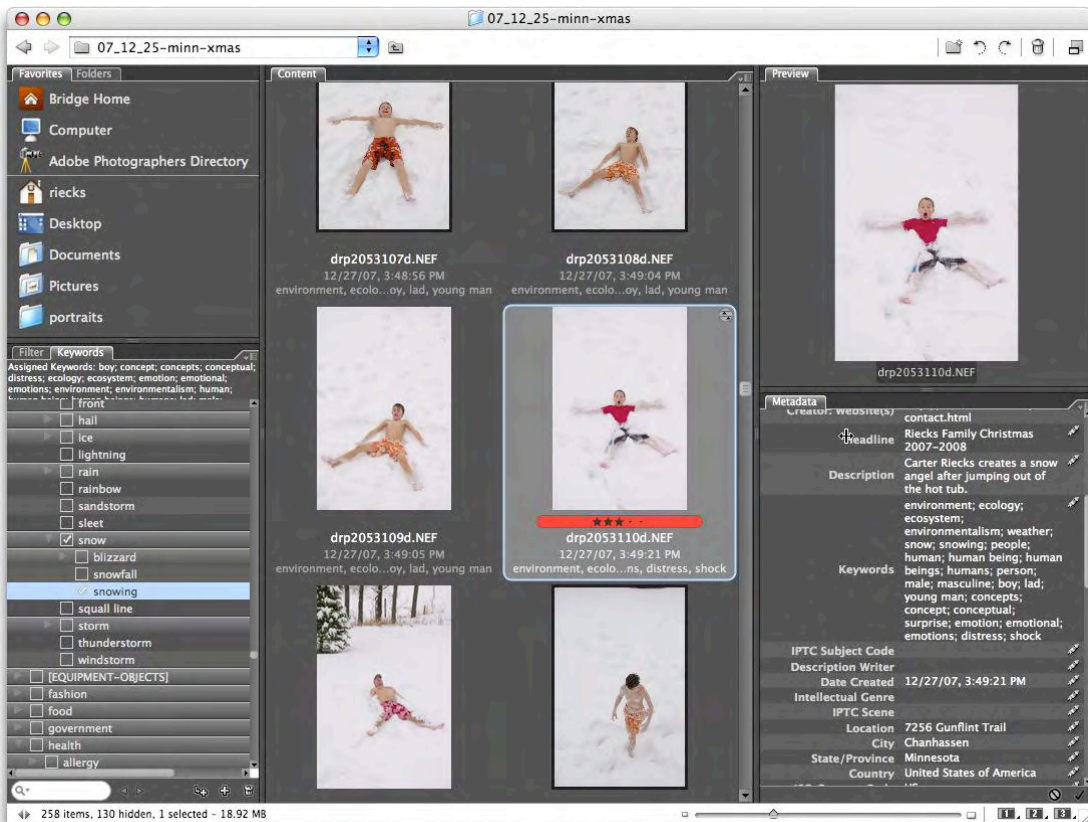## ADOBE BRIDGE

This page includes basic instructions for embedding metadata in digital images using Adobe Bridge. Follow these steps and when you send an image file out into the world, your caption, keywords, location information and more can travel with it.

The **File Info** dialogue box in Adobe Creative Suite applications includes IPTC Core metadata fields. With these fields, you can add copyright and contact information, as well as caption, keywords and location. Adobe provides a couple of ways for Creative Suite users to embed metadata in images. You can enter it directly into the metadata panel within Bridge, or even open the File Info feature directly from within Bridge. This direct writing of the metadata is important, since when using Bridge, you can change the descriptive information for a JPEG image without subjecting it to an additional round of compression.

A selection of images in Bridge 2.1 (for Creative Suite 3), showing the Keyword and Metadata panels.

What we now call Bridge began as the version of FileBrowser in Adobe Photoshop CS. In all versions of Photoshop since CS, this browser application is called Bridge, exists separately from Photoshop and is arranged like a light table. Since it provides easy access to a variety of digital media (including video files), applications and settings (not just images), Bridge serves as a control hub for the Adobe Creative Suite. When working with

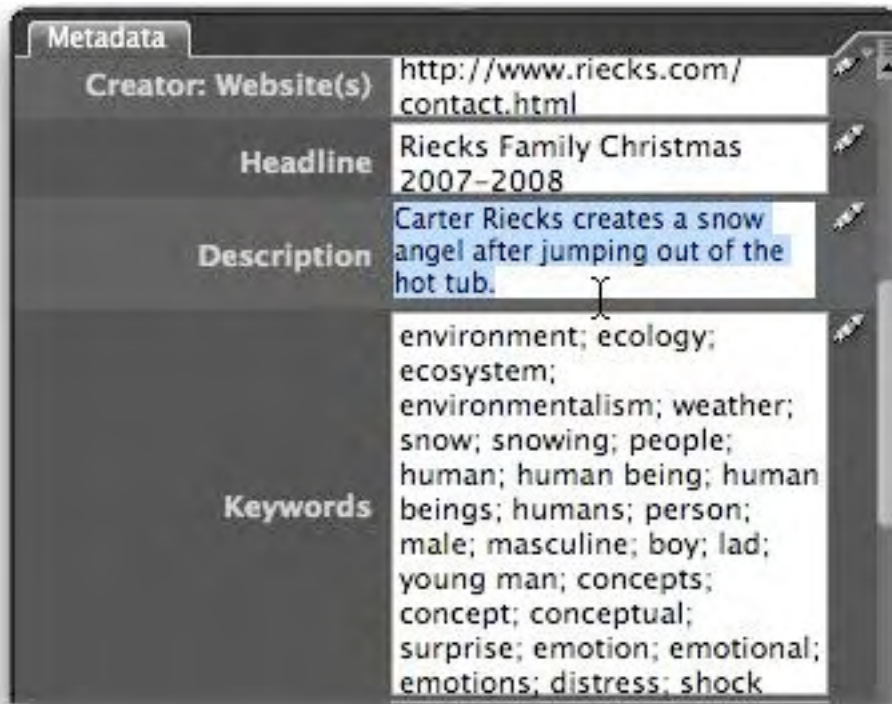**PhotoMetaData: Adobe Bridge Tutorial**

photographs, you can view image thumbnails, delete the images you don't like and add descriptive information, so you can find them again later. In addition, you can apply or copy Camera Raw settings, and search for images based on a wide variety of metadata.

The Bridge version that ships with Creative Suite 4 applications includes an expanded set of features and in certain ways resembles some cataloging programs. Since various Adobe Creative Suite products include Bridge, photographers just starting out tend to use it for editing, organizing and embedding metadata in their images. Those with an itch for speed may move on to other applications, but it is useful to understand how Bridge works, since you are likely to use it at some point for accessing images.

To add metadata to files, first **select a file by clicking on it**. Depending on the "view" you may have to click on a tab labeled "Metadata" to see the various fields. *In the default view for Metadata Focused, you can enter information in the appropriate fields in the metadata pane, which is located under the Metadata tab in the top right corner of Bridge. The Metadata panel is visible in two CS4 standard workspaces: Essentials and Metadata. In the Metadata workspace, the "Metadata" panel is on the left side of the workspace, and in the Essentials view it is on the right.*

You can select and tag multiple files simultaneously. And note that after entering information in the Metadata panel, you must save it to the files by clicking the checkmark icon at the bottom of that panel.

In **CS4**, after entering the information, you must save it by clicking the **checkmark icon** at the bottom of the dialogue to Apply the info.


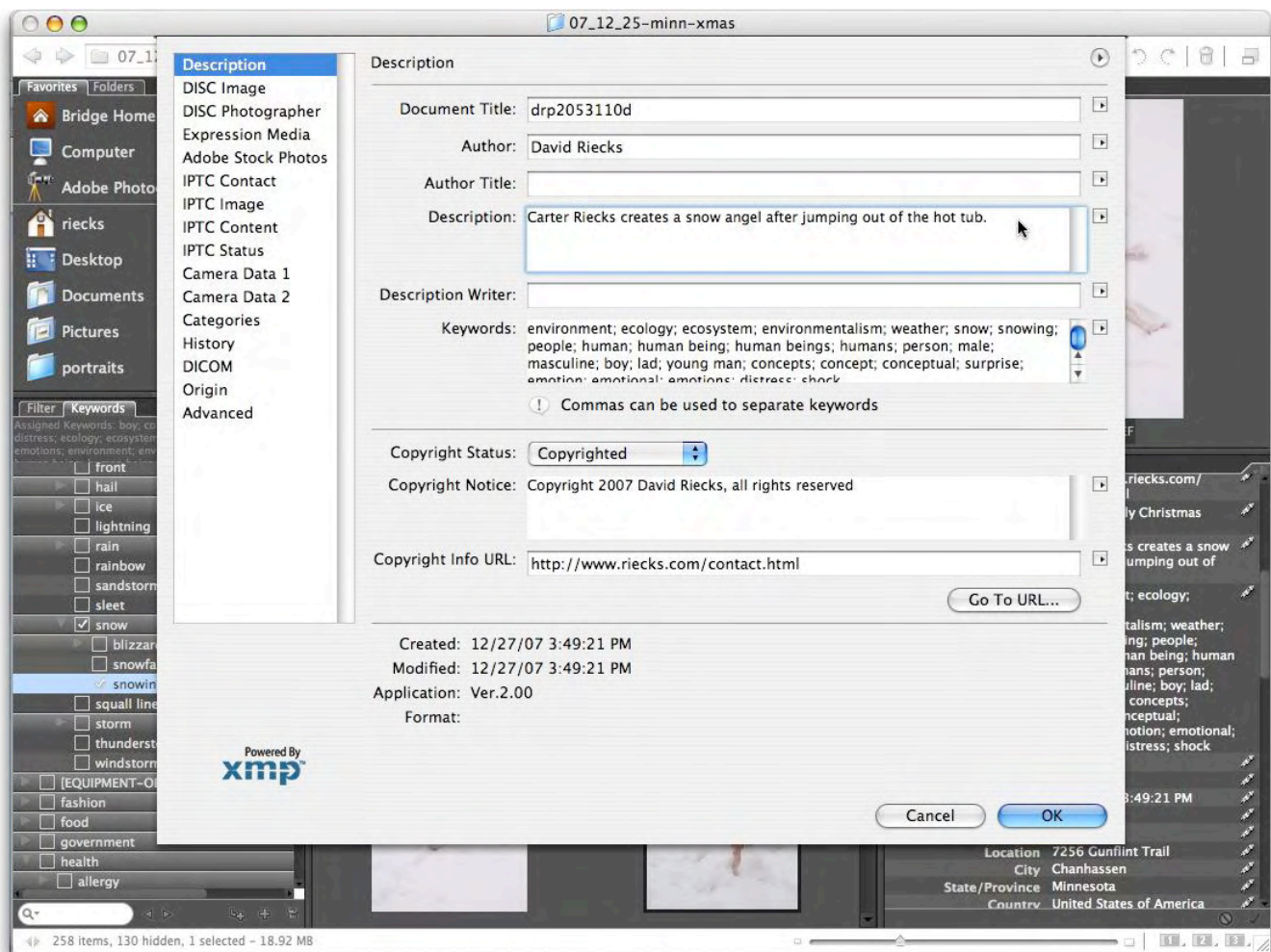*Entering information into the Description field within the Metadata panel of Bridge 2.1 (for CS3).*

One of Bridge's biggest advantages is its tight integration with other Adobe applications.

By right-clicking or (on a Mac) control-clicking on an image and choosing File Info, or accessing File Info under the File menu, we see the same metadata fields within the same dialogue we as when selecting File Info in Adobe Photoshop CS through CS4 - except for one difference: The Bridge version of File Info allows you append or change the metadata in a JPEG file without recompressing the image.
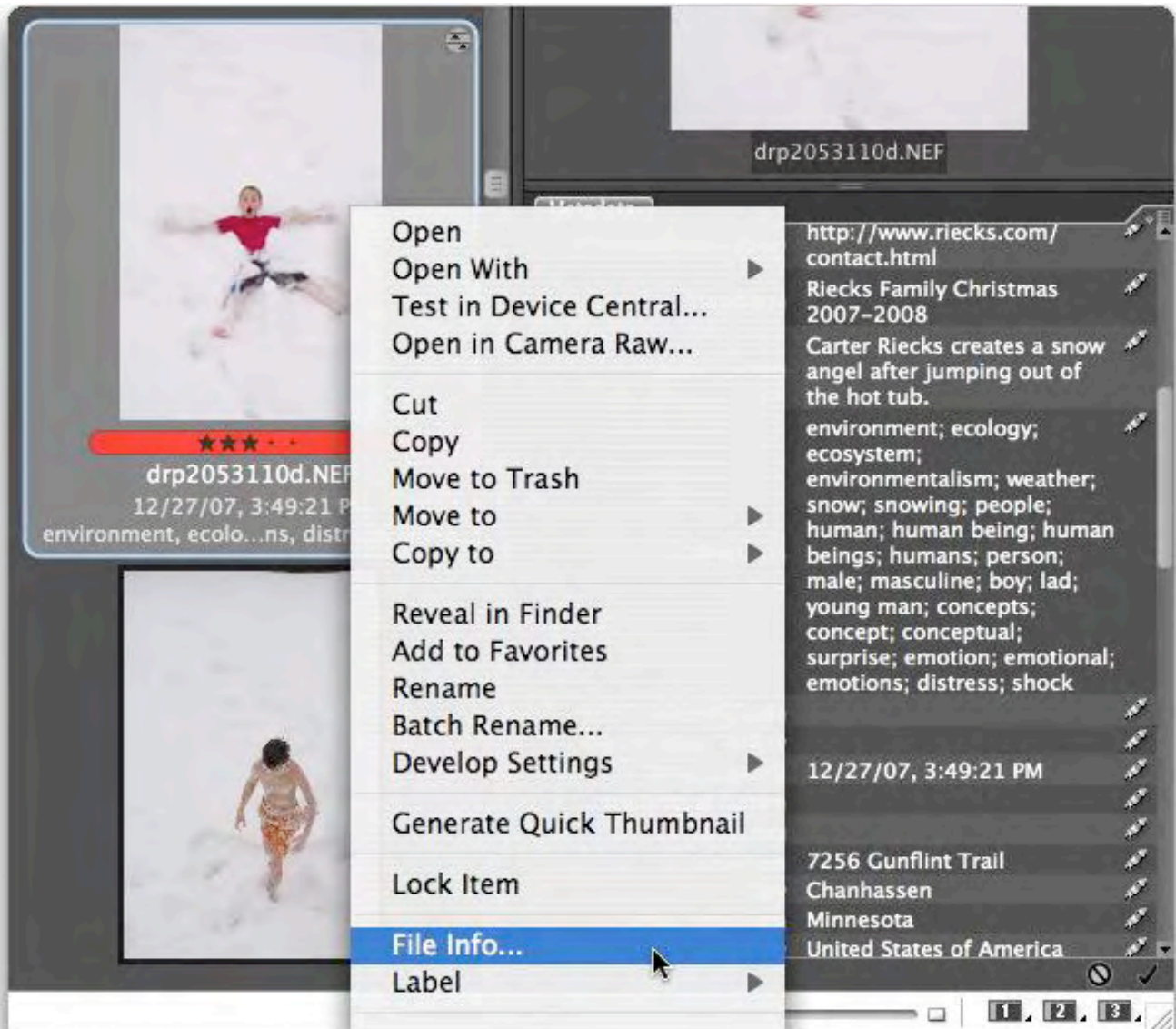
After selecting an image you can right-click or (on a Mac) control-click on an image and choose File Info.

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Photometadata.org was developed by the Stock Artists Alliance in partnership with the Library of Congress
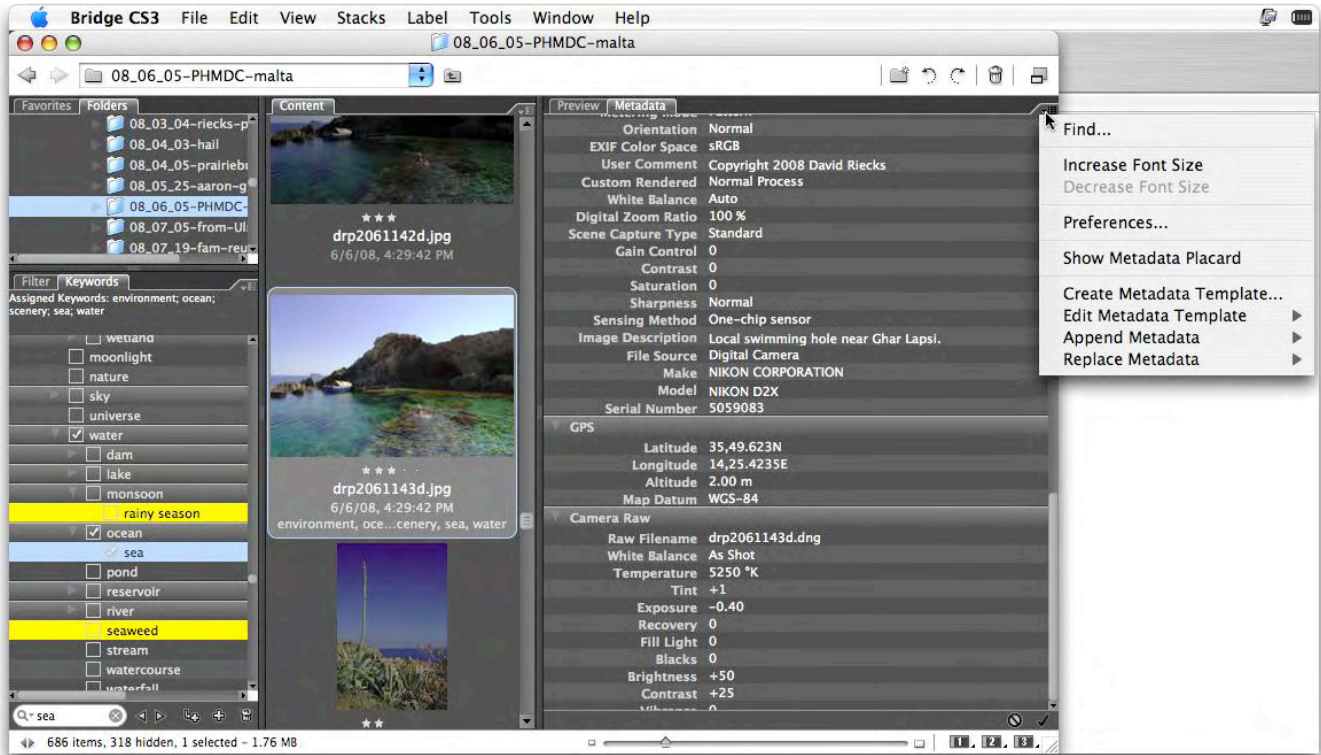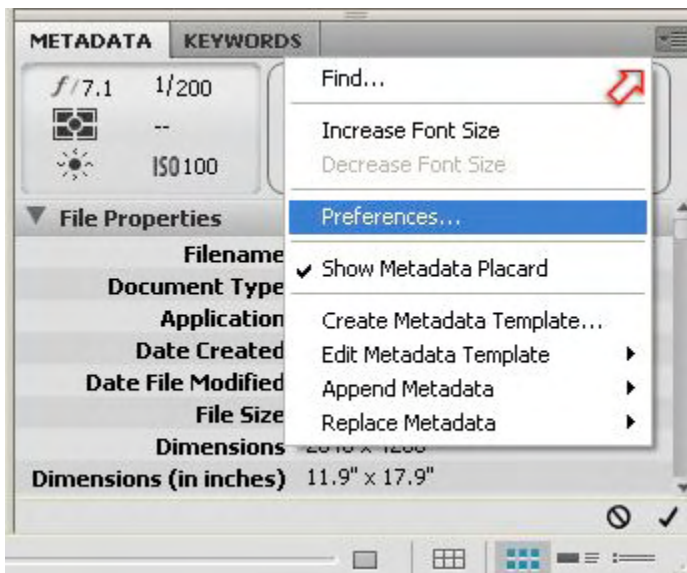©2009 Stock Artists Alliance. http://www.stockartistsalliance.org

Tags entered in Bridge translate into IPTC Core tags when the File>File Info command is selected in Bridge or Adobe Photoshop CS3 and CS4 (the applications share a common dialogue box).
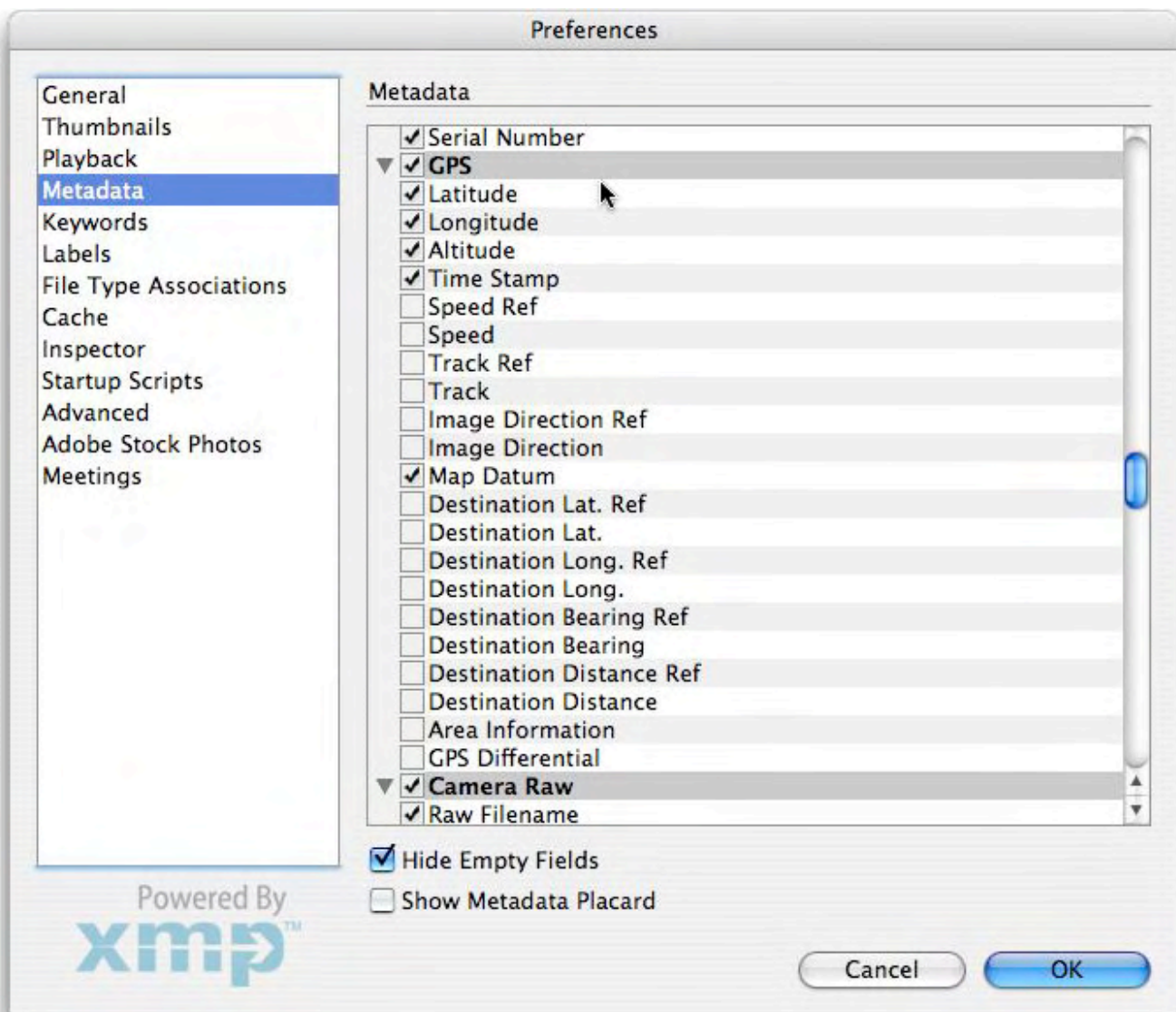
SETTING PREFERENCES FOR METADATA

You can minimize the size of your metadata panel in Bridge by modifying the preferences to turn off fields you don't intend to fill. First, open the preferences dialogue using one of three methods: Select the icon in the top corner of the metadata panel and choose **Preferences** from the pull down menu; choose **Preferences** from the Bridge menu on a Mac or from the Edit menu on a Windows system; or use the **Command** (Mac) or **Control** (Windows) **plus K** hotkey combination.

You can change the selection of fields visible in the Bridge's Metadata panel with the metadata preferences dialogue, checking or unchecking the various boxes.

Next, go down the list and check or uncheck the fields you plan to fill or want displayed. Since the IPTC Core set encompasses nearly all fields in the IPTC (IIM or "legacy") schema, you may wish to **only check those within the IPTC Core.**

As a starting point, you might include **Creator** (author/photographer), **Copyright**, **Source**, **Description** (the detailed caption), as well as **Location** (building name or street address), **City, State/Province**, **Country** and **Country Code**. **Keywords** can really help when seeking one of those "needle in a haystack" images. Putting the **actual filename** of the image into the **Title** field will make it easy to find the image later, even if someone downloads the image and changes the name of the file to something they expect will be easy to recall, such as "fuzzy kitty."

For details on intended uses for these fields, see the Guide to Photo Metadata Fields or download the IPTC User's guide.

Unless you really need to know the camera you used or its exposure settings, you may want to **toggle off** the Camera Data, or Exif, fields (you can still enable them later if you need access to that information).

Once you have limited the number of visible fields, data entry might seem less daunting.

One of Bridge's most powerful features is that it allows adding metadata to a single image, a selection or an entire folder at once.

Let's start with a single image. After writing your caption, use the mouse to move your cursor into the next field. But you'll quickly learn it's much easier to use the **TAB** key to advance to the next field. (**Shift + Tab** will move to the previous field.)

When entering your metadata, click the **checkmark** at the lower right of the metadata panel to confirm your entries and embed them in the file. If you don't click the checkmark and try to click away from the selected image(s), a dialogue will appear, asking whether to apply the changes.

For groups of images, many (sometimes all) metadata fields will be identical, making it much more efficient to embed this information simultaneously into all images of a selection or folder. Select a contiguous series of related images by clicking on the first image, then holding the **Shift** key down while clicking on the **last** image of the series (as images are selected, their borders turn a lighter gray). Select groups of non-contiguous images by **Command/Control** clicking on each additional image.

After a few tries, this will become second nature. Labeling your images this way ensures caption information is never lost, since it travels with the file itself.

COLOR LABELS

Some of the viewing panes within Bridge allow you to see both **color labels and star ratings**. Rating and ranking your images helps note the very best images within a set. It can quickly separate "record" shots from those you might feature in your portfolio or final project. You can set **Star Ratings** for an image or group of images using the Command/Control, plus the 1 through 5 keys.
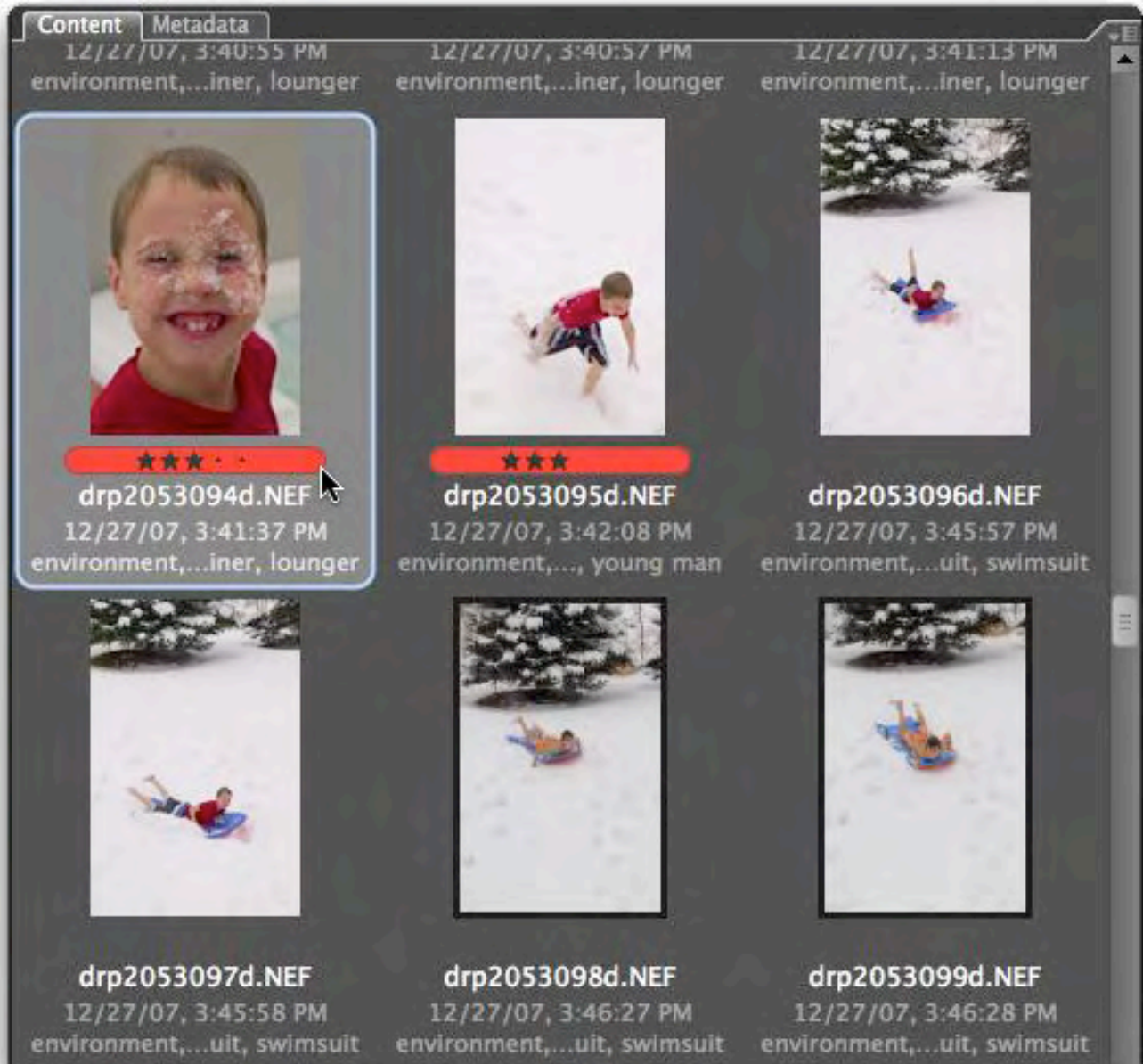

In order to properly exchange the color label values, **you must set the preferences for Labels** to be the same as in your other applications, such as Lightroom and Photo Mechanic, that store this XMP value. Some applications, such as iView Media Pro and Expression Media, do not use this information.

Again, open the **Preferences** dialogue under the appropriate menu item, or use the Command/Control, plus K hot key combo:

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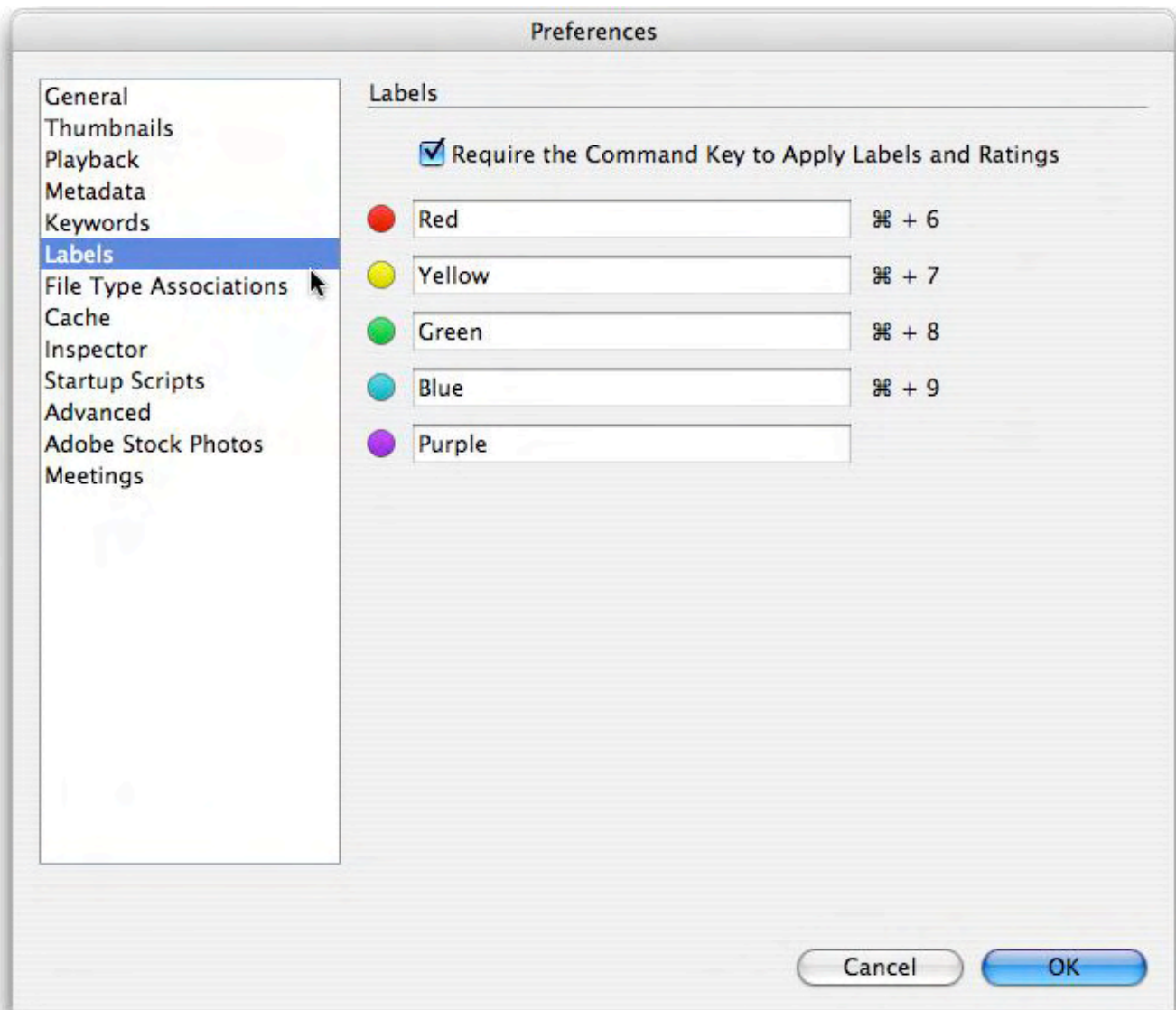
Depending on your involvement with keywording, you may also set up your Bridge **Keyword** preferences (shown below) to automatically apply the **parent keywords** within a keyword hierarchy. Bridge 2.1 (CS3) or later allows you to create or import a hierarchical keyword catalog with broad terms, such as "animals," that can narrow down to specific terms, such as breeds of dogs or birds. If you also use **Adobe Lightroom**, you'll want to check the box to "Read Hierarchical Keywords" so keyword information entered in Lightroom displays properly in Bridge.
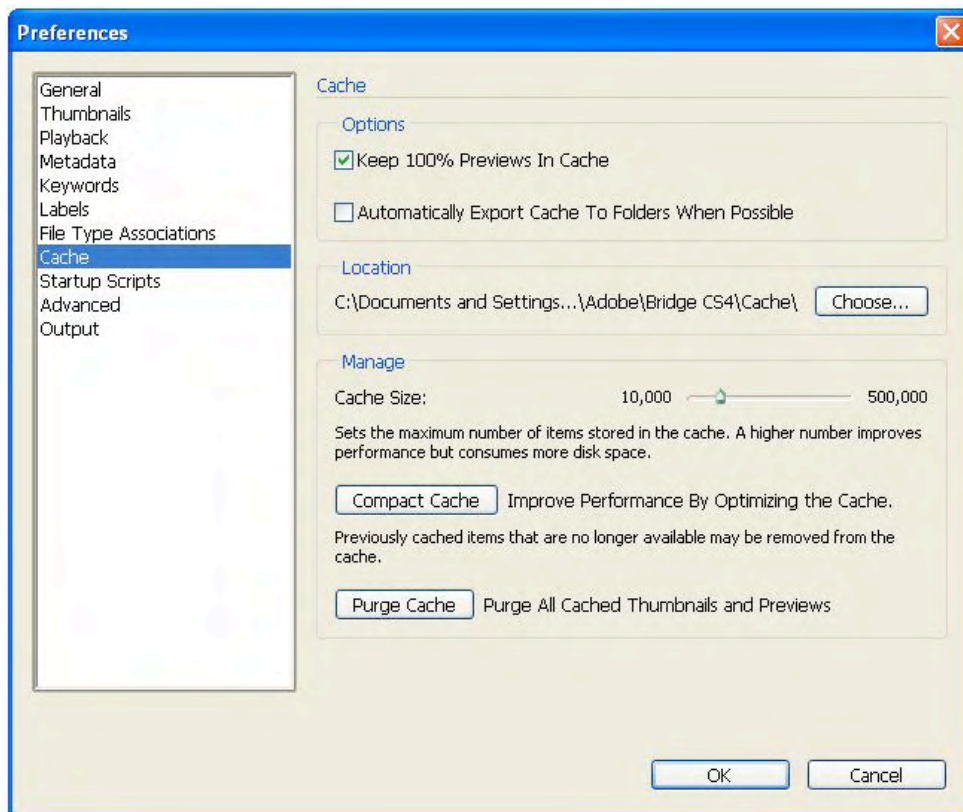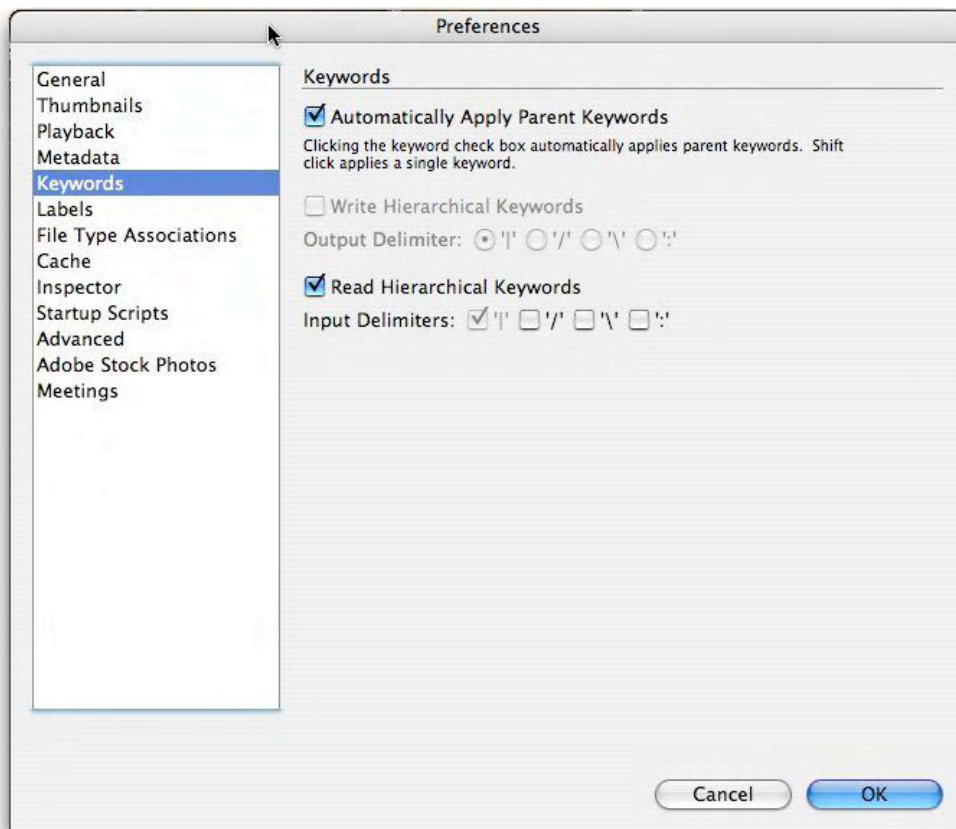
Default settings for the Cache tab/panel in Bridge for CS4. There may be some instances where you must purge all cached thumbnails and previews. But first try using the F5 "refresh" option before resorting to this measure.

PhotoMetaData: Adobe Bridge Tutorial

Photometadata.org was developed by the Stock Artists Alliance in partnership with the Library of Congress

While Adobe Bridge is considered an image browser, the Bridge cache improves performance when returning to the same folder of images. Metadata, previews and thumbnails are stored in this cache so they don't need to be created each time you visit that folder. This same cache helps search and find files you have previously browsed, but have not yet viewed in Bridge. Bridge is not the same as cataloging applications, since its changes to metadata are immediately written to the original file (or its XMP sidecar for RAW formats). If you reopen a folder in Bridge, it will automatically re-read the metadata from the files when the modification dates are later than those in the cached record.

Setting preferences for pane views

For Bridge 2.1 (CS3):
From the Window menu, choose Workspace and then Reset to Default Workspace. Next, choose Command/Control F4 to see the **Metadata Focus** view, where the lower left displays a Metadata panel.

Or simply choose the **Metadata Panel** option from the **Window** menu, which will pull the Metadata panel to the foreground.

For Bridge 3.0.0 (for Creative Suite 4):
From the Window menu item, choose Workspace and then Reset Workspace or Reset Standard Workspaces. You can then choose Command/Control F3 for the Metadata focus view.

CREATING OR EDITING METADATA TEMPLATES

When entering the same information again and again, think about using metadata templates. A metadata template is nothing more than a collection of specific metadata fields saved as one or more **presets**. If you want to add your name, copyright and contact information to a number of images, there is no reason to enter it more than once. In addition, templates ensure you enter this "boilerplate" information consistently.

In Bridge, you can access and use metadata templates several ways. If you have existing templates (saved as XMP files in the Metadata Templates folder), you can apply these to a selection of images using Bridge as easily as you would to a single file in Photoshop. You always have the option to **Append** or **Replace** the metadata in the existing files, as explained below.

To **create** a metadata template, go to the **Tools** menu, and choose **Create Metadata Template**.
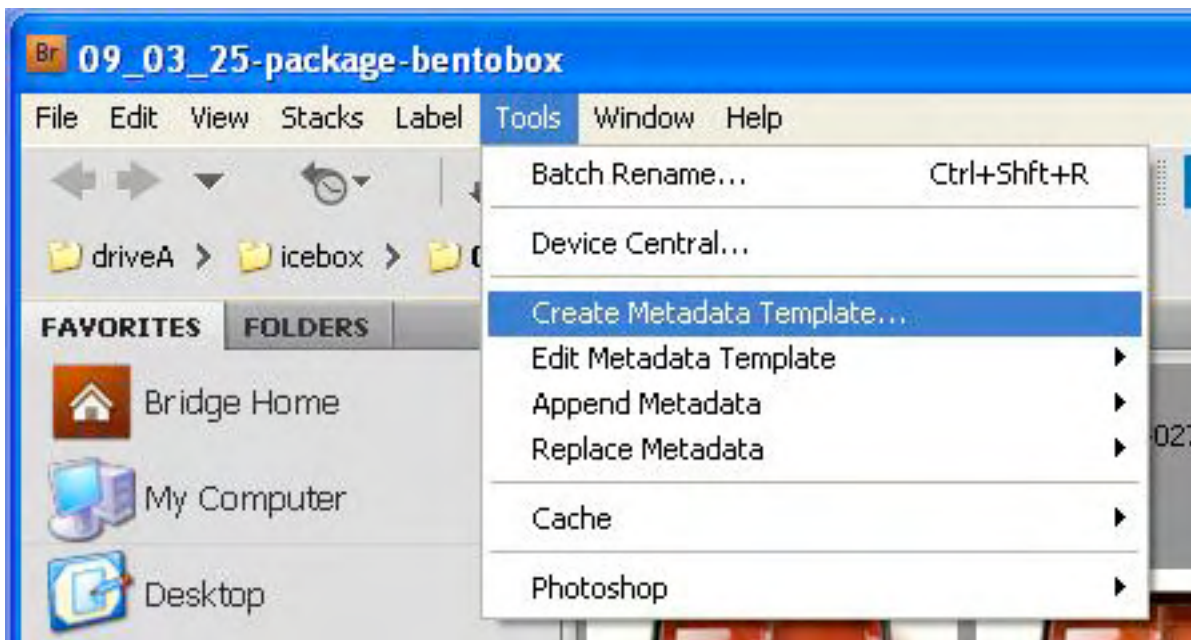
If you have of an existing template with many of the values you need, you may find it easier to use the **Edit Metadata Template** option. Choosing either **Edit or Create** will open the **Metadata Template dialogue** shown below. The options are the same when you choose to Edit or Create Templates.
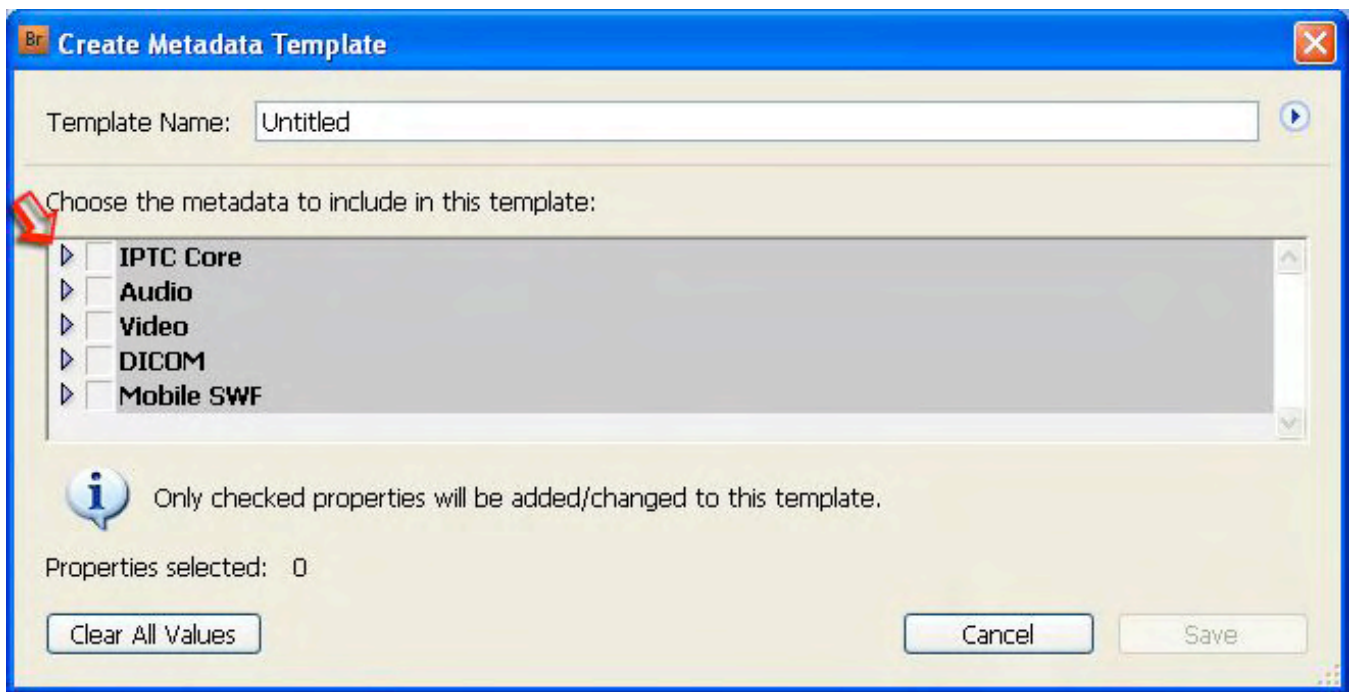
When you first open the **Create Metadata Template** dialogue, all the various metadata properties may only be visible as a single item. Also note at the bottom of the dialogue that **only checked properties** will be added or changed in this template. If you click on the arrow at the left side of any of the metadata groupings, it will expand to show the full range of fields, such IPTC Core shown below.
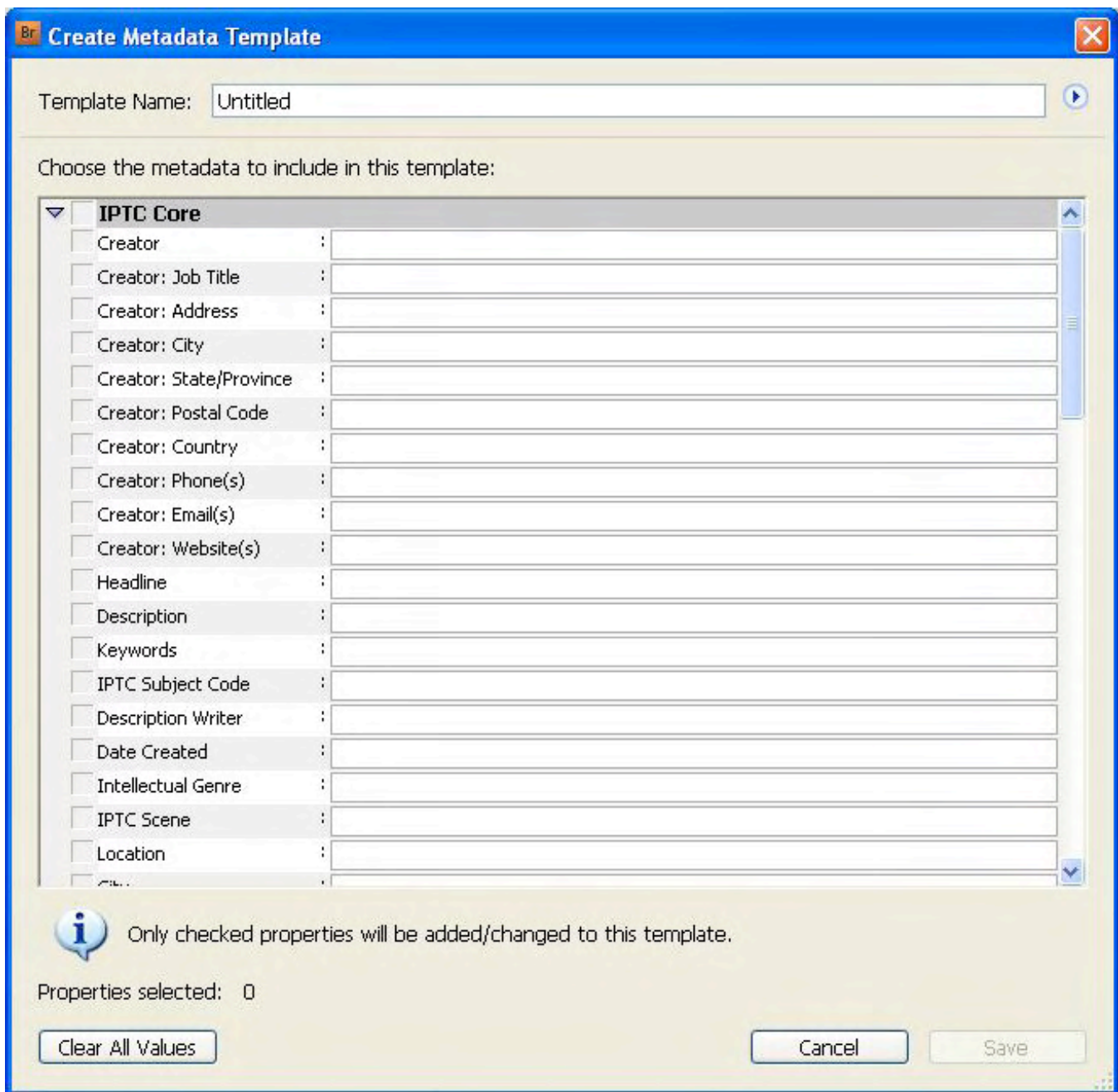
Be sure to to give a meaningful name to the file before you save your template, so you can find it again. If you don't, you will create, or overwrite, a file called "Untitled."

NOTE: By default, the IPTC Core values are hidden below the top-level listing. Click on the right-pointing arrow to reveal the fields below. As you click to the left of each field name, a checkmark will appear, indicating it is to be part of the template. Fill in the values you want included in the template you create, name the template and click the Save button. You might create a template that includes just your contact information (name, address, phone, email, web) and copyright notice with the current year. It's also possible to save metadata from any image with this fluid dialogue.

PhotoMetaData: Adobe Bridge Tutorial

Cautionary Note on Creating Metadata Templates

If creating, or even editing, an existing Bridge metadata template, **be sure no images are selected in your preview pane.** If not, Bridge may save some fields you hadn't intended to your metadata template. Some users have reported anomalies, such as fields emptied, when applying templates intended to add information. It's also possible with some early versions of Bridge to inadvertently embed the camera data or Adobe Camera Raw settings.

There is one known bug within Bridge's template editor. Be sure to click out of each field before saving the template, or risk not having that field's entry included in the template.

While it might seem more appropriate to name the template as a first step, this bug makes it to name the template as last step before saving. Another workaround is to click in the template name field before before clicking Save.

Only fields shown and checked in Bridge's template editor dialogue will be saved in the template. Existing-but-empty fields delete metadata properties. The delete behavior is a feature; not saving the text you typed into the template is a bug.

There is no option in the Metadata Template Editor to add the Copyright Status value available in Photoshop's File Info dialogue. Since Copyright Status is not an IPTC Core field, and it is only seen within Adobe Creative Suite applications, it may not concern you. But if want this included in your metadata template, it is possible to manually edit the XMP text file of the template with a plain-text editor.

APPLYING A METADATA TEMPLATE TO A SELECTION OF IMAGES.

It is simple to add metadata automatically to a group of images, large or small. In Bridge, you can select a single file, all files in a folder, or a selection of images within a folder, then apply a metadata template to all in one operation.
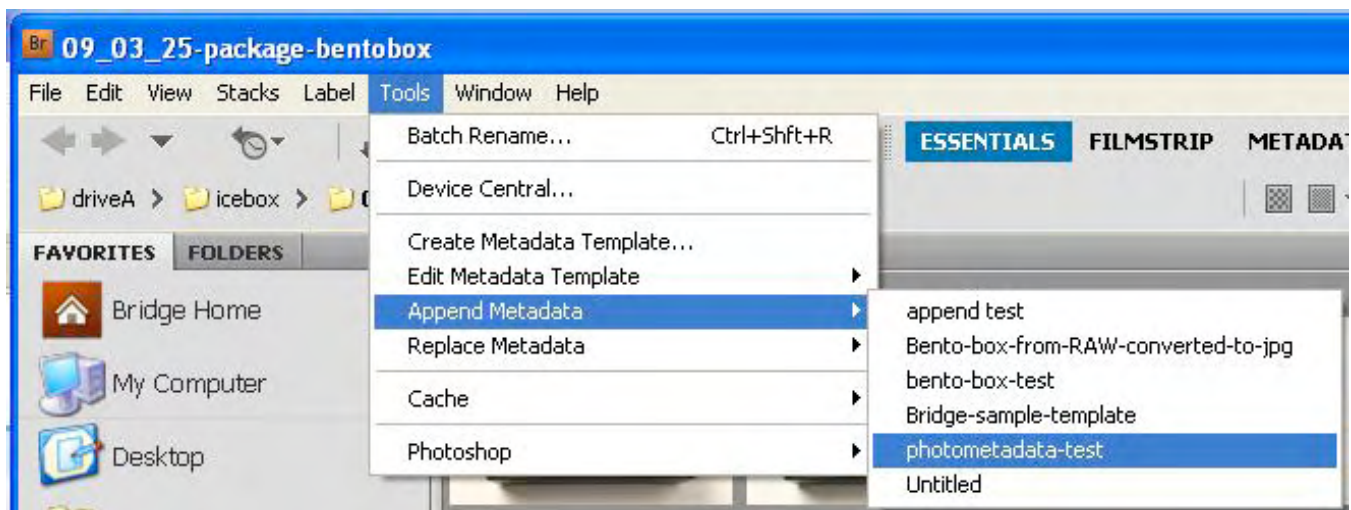
First, select all images you want to label with Metadata. Then choose the **Append or Replace** option from the Tools menu, along with the template you wish to apply.

About Append and Replace

Append will add values from the template to fields that are empty. Existing information is **not replaced**.

Replace adds values from the template to empty fields AND **replaces** existing values in fields.

Once you have selected the option to Append or Replace and chosen a specific template, Bridge will apply this metadata template to all images you selected, as soon as you release the mouse button.

Some photographers focus on just adding **the most basic, critical metadata before Raw processing, to protect their images as soon as they are ingested into a computer**. Since this information hardly ever changes, you can reuse this such a template for many types of assignments. Once you understand how, it's easy to make additional templates and expand that first wave of metadata to include information such as **keywords, rankings, and client and job names.**

You can also use Adobe Photo Downloader to apply a metadata template when importing images from a memory card to your computer. From the File menu, choose Get Photos from Camera ... to access this feature. If you want Bridge to always open this downloading feature, check the box next to "When a Camera is Connected, Launch Adobe Photo Downloader," located in the **General** tab of Bridge's **Preferences**.

Hanging on to your Hard work.

Having spent all this time entering information into your images' metadata fields, you'll probably want to make sure it stays there. That's why it's unfortunate that Photoshop's **"Save for Web"** function can undo your efforts. Photographers have long used this feature to prepare images for websites. Sadly, many photographers don't understand this feature **can easily strip files of vital metadata and contact information**. See the section for Web Designers in the UPDIG Photographer guide for details on how to protect yourself and educate others about how easy they can accidentally remove metadata.

 SUMMARY.

Adobe Bridge is more compact and configurable than Photoshop File Info for adding and editing photo metadata. If working on a single screen or laptop, you might find it easier to write captions in Bridge, since you can see a thumbnail or preview of the image unobscured by the File Info dialogue.

You can easily show or hide the metadata panel, and moving from image to image will quickly show whether each has embedded metadata.

In addition, Bridge (2.1 for CS3, or later) has a **Keywords** panel, in which you can view or create a controlled vocabulary of hierarchical keywords. You can enter **Keywords** in File Info dialogue of **Photoshop** and other **Creative Suite** applications, or within Bridge. However, you will only see this long list of keywords when viewing images in Adobe Bridge. These terms visually represent their broad-to-narrow relationship, and they aren't visible in the File Info dialogue.
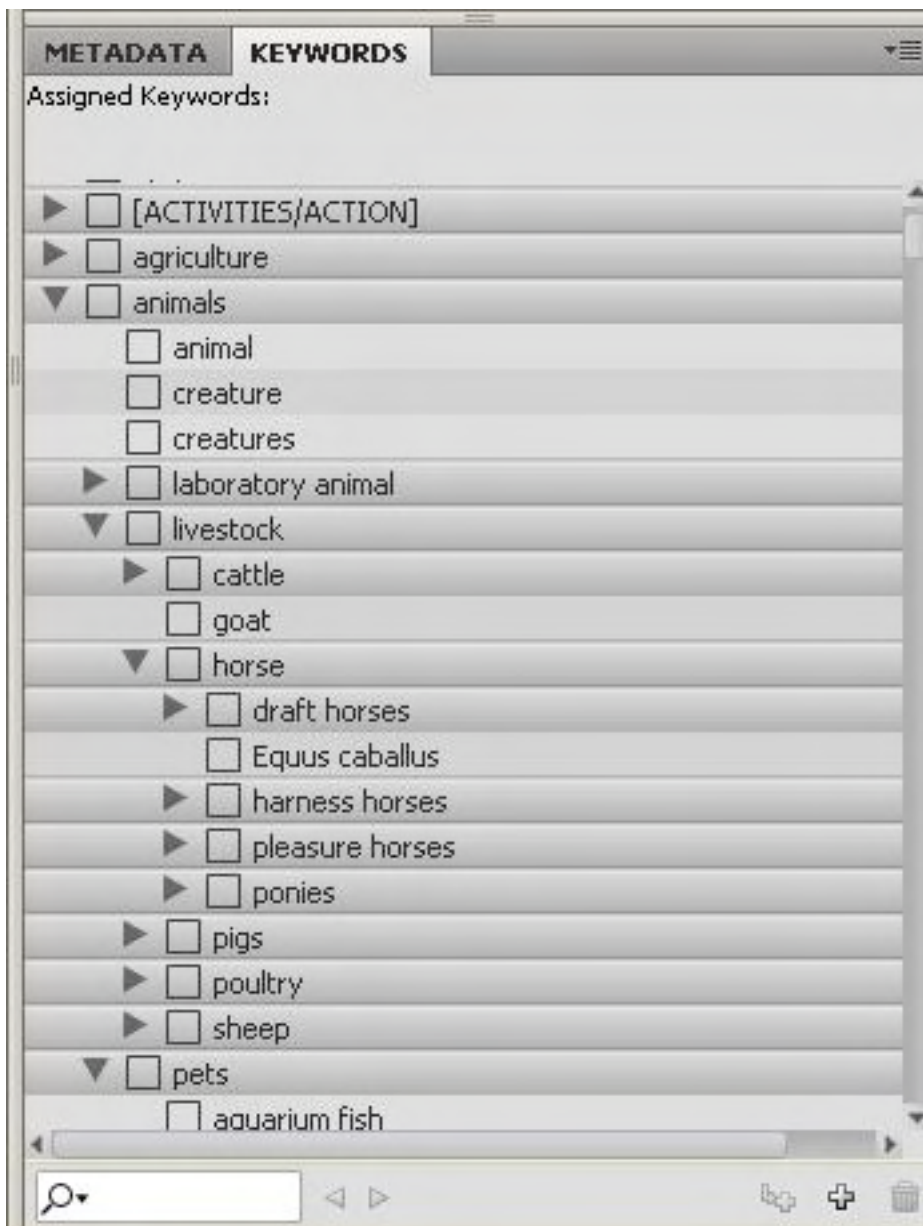
One of the advantages of using Bridge is the Keyword panel. This feature allows you to import or construct a list of terms arranged with narrower terms located beneath broader.