

Discover Tethered Shooting with a DSLR and Laptop

By Bill Debley

Tethered shooting consists of connecting your camera to a personal computer, typically a laptop, using a USB cable (or wireless transfer) and the software that came with your camera to manipulate your camera's setting in manual mode, import images as shot and view them almost instantly with photo editing/viewing software such as Adobe Lightroom, Aperture, and Canon Digital Photo Professional or Zoom BrowserEX.

Reviewing images on a computer display is much more informative than using the camera's LCD screen, especially when doing studio or macro photography. This gives you immediate feedback on lighting, focus, color, and exposure. You also have the ability via the camera's software to do time-lapse photography. Finally, if you are shooting an event, photo seminar, or ceremonies, you have the ability to project the images on a screen or to an HDTV monitor, and to print out photos immediately.

Your camera must support tethered operation by the way of the MTP/PTP protocol. Most DSLR cameras less than 4-5 years old from major manufacturers support this mode. (Check your camera's manual under the section describing USB connectivity or remote shooting.) You need a mini-USB to USB 2.0 cable, it should have come with your camera. I recommend purchasing a USB extension cable or longer cable to give you the freedom to move about. Standard limit on cable length is 5 meters (~15 feet), if you need more length, you may purchase a USB 2.0 extender/repeater.

I mentioned the software applications: Lightroom and Aperture to display and edit the pictures, but there are other less expensive or even free applications that will work, such as Google Picasa. Sometimes the camera ships with tethering software in the box, such as Canon DPP, additionally there are several third party software developers that offer tethering solutions for most cameras.

The following set up will allow you to zero in on the perfect shot, print the shots on the fly at an event, and project the shots at a presentation, and much more.

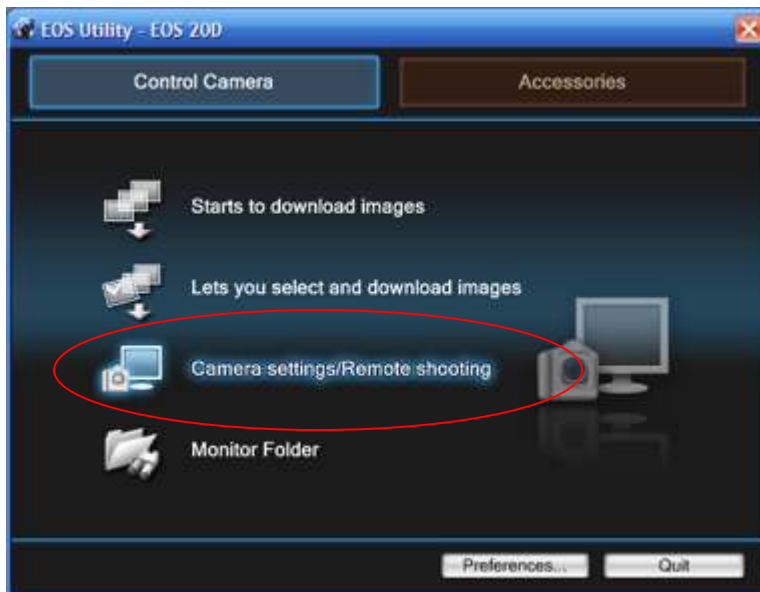
After that, it's up to you!

Since I own a Canon DSLR I will use it as an example as to how to set up for “tethered” shooting:

First, install Canon's [EOS Utility](#) application, which is supplied on the CD that came with your Canon camera. This is the application that allows you to ‘talk’ to your camera (set to MANUAL) using a USB port. Make sure you have installed the WIA drivers for your camera. These drivers are specific to each model of camera and should be on the bundled software CD that came with your camera. If you lost your CD, fear not, these drivers and the EOS Utility application are free downloads from the Canon web site. It’s probably a good idea to download the most recent drivers, anyway. (If you’re a Nikon shooter, you’ll need Camera Control Pro 2, which sells for \$145.95 from B&H Photo) After you have installed EOS Utility and drivers, you are ready to begin.

Using a USB 2.0 to mini-USB cable, connect your camera to your computer. Make sure your battery is fully charged; the EOS Utility may not run if your battery is low. Turn on your camera and set it to “MANUAL” mode and communication (camera menu item) is set to print/PC.

Double click on the EOS Utility shortcut on your desktop to start the EOS Utility, and then click on **Camera setting/Remote shooting**.

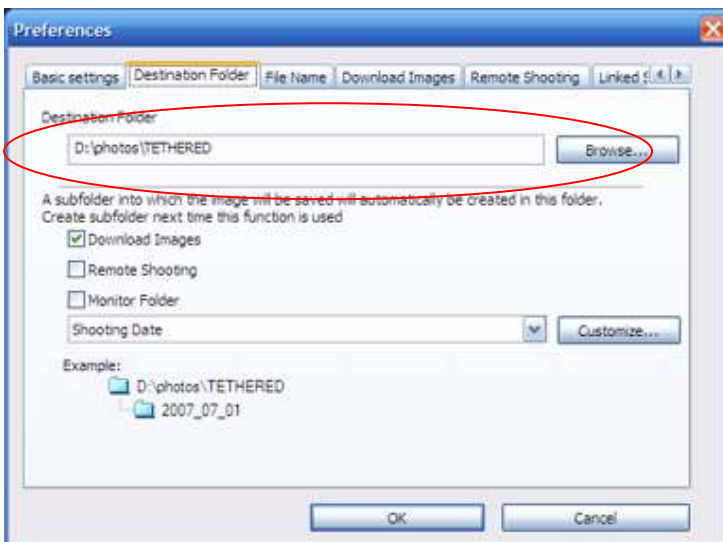


At this point you should have your camera's control dialog box. From this box you can control your settings from your laptop including time-lapse (under Tool).

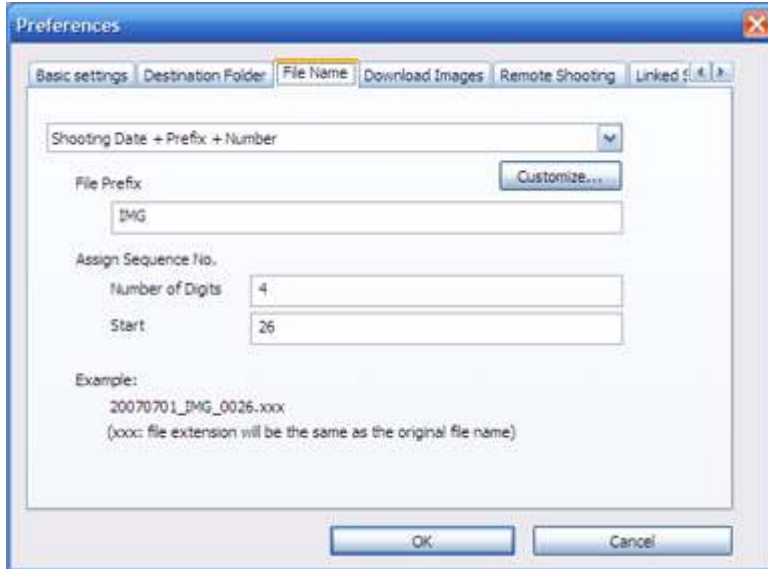


At this point we can set up your preference as to which folder you want the images sent to on your computer's hard drive. In the upper right of the EOS box, go to **File**, then **Preferences**.

Under the **Destination Folder** tab, choose which directory you want your images to be saved in. Each photo you take will be transferred and saved in this folder, e.g. a folder in Google Picasa where you can add text, do a collage, print, e-mail, view full-screen, etc.



Under the **File Name** tab, you can set the shooting date, prefix and a number.



The **Linked Software** tab is where you can choose to just save the images to disk or use the default options that let you open the photos in Digital Photo Professional, ZoomBrowserEX, Google Picasa, etc.

