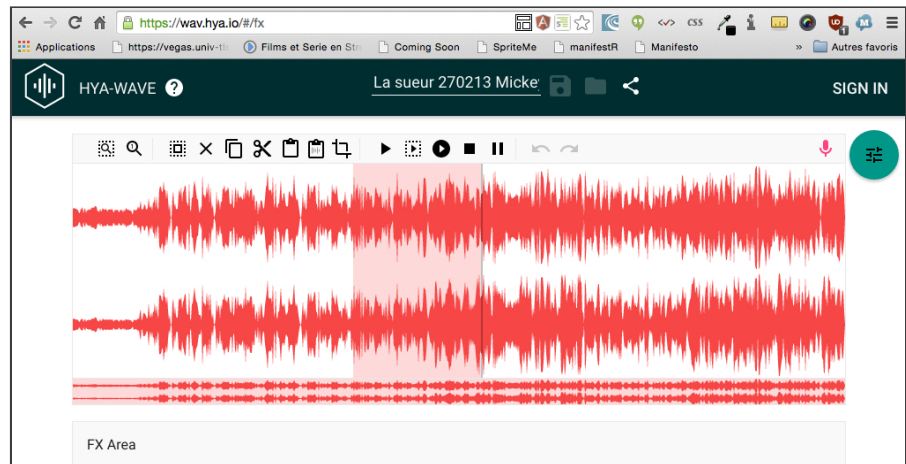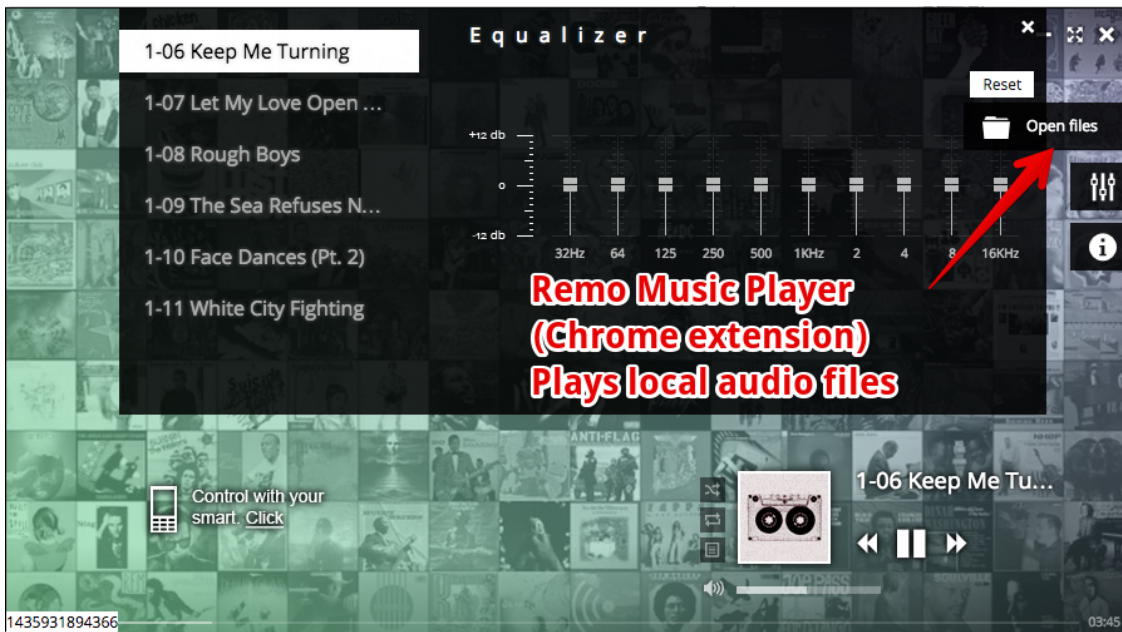# The File API

INTRODUCTION

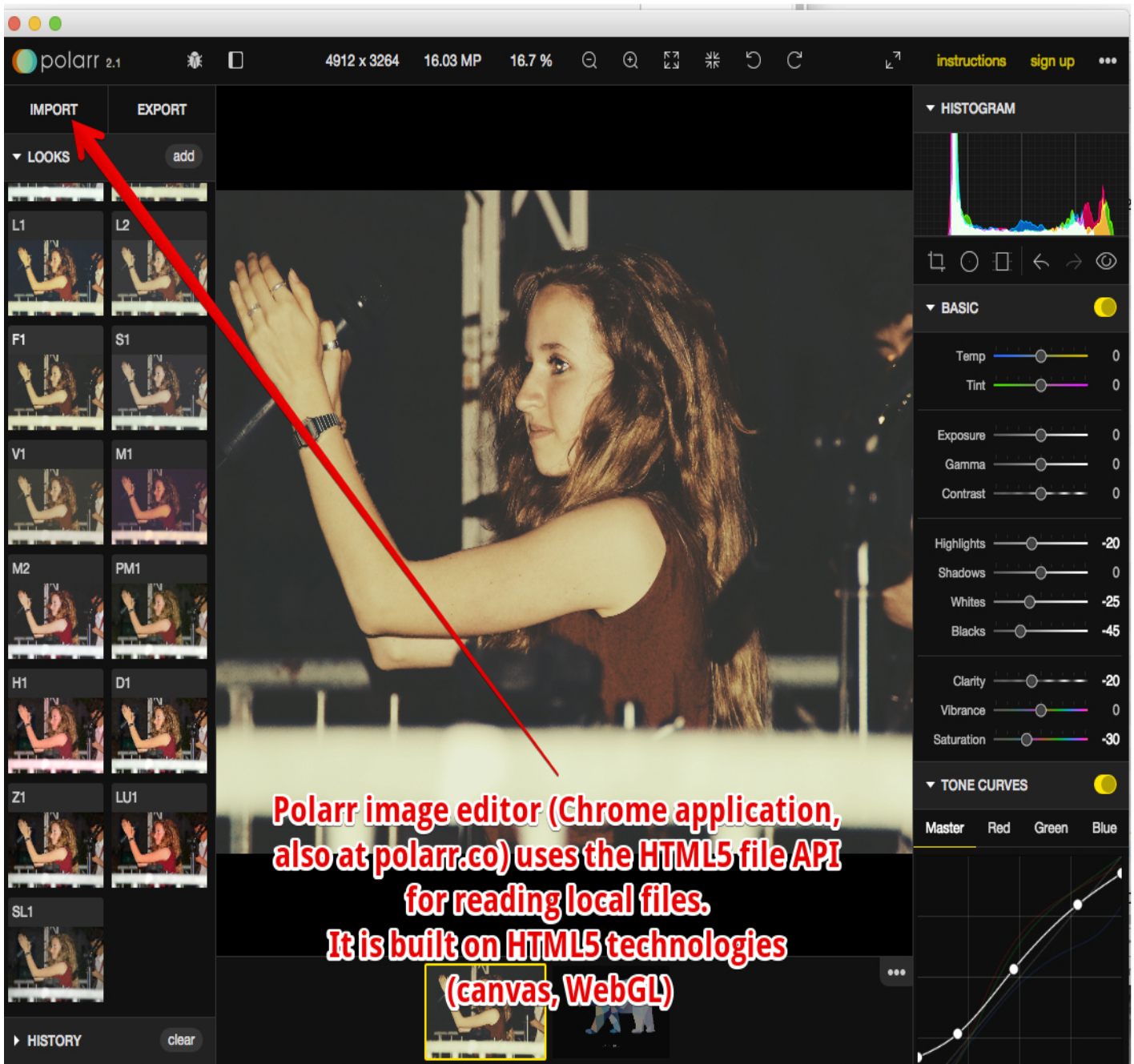The objective of this chapter is to provide an overview of the File API.

Before HTML5, file management was limited to multipart forms and to Ajax for sending/requesting files to/from a remote Web server.

Possible actions were limited, both for the developer and for the user.

However, HTML5 now comes with an API called "File" that holds features for accessing file metadata (name, size, type) from client-side JavaScript. The API has also methods for reading file contents directly in the browser. This is particularly interesting for displaying preview of images before uploading them, or - and this is much more interesting - for developing Web applications that work with local files without the need for a server. Imagine a multimedia player that accesses (in read-only) your file system, read your audio and video files, etc., such as the Remo Audio player below (Google Chrome extension written in HTML5), or an application that edits the audio content of local mp3 files, for example, such as the HYA-WAVE sound editor (screenshot above).

Remo Music Player
(Chrome extension)
Plays local audio files

Polarr image editor (Chrome application, also at polarr.co) uses the HTML5 file API for reading local files.
It is built on HTML5 technologies (canvas, WebGL)

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- The W3C specification about the File API
- Article on html5rocks.com about the file API (and drag'n'drop)
- Article from developer.mozilla.org about the file API