

What is File Management

As described earlier, file management is basically the process of designing new folders and assigning files to those folders. The main goal in file management is to have a system that enables you to find your files quickly and easily, both every day and when you are ready to move your data to a new location (such as when you get a new computer).

A well-designed file management structure can:

- make it easy to locate important files quickly
- keep related documents or files together
- make it easier to move groups of data, rather than having to search for individual files, when you move to a new machine
- facilitate sharing of appropriate files and protection of non-public files
- help you back up important data quickly

Methods for Categorizing Data

There are two main approaches to organizing data files. The first is program or **application-based** organization, which organizes files by their file extension type. The second approach is **project-based** organization, in which files are organized by work projects. In this approach, files of many extension types are grouped in a single folder.

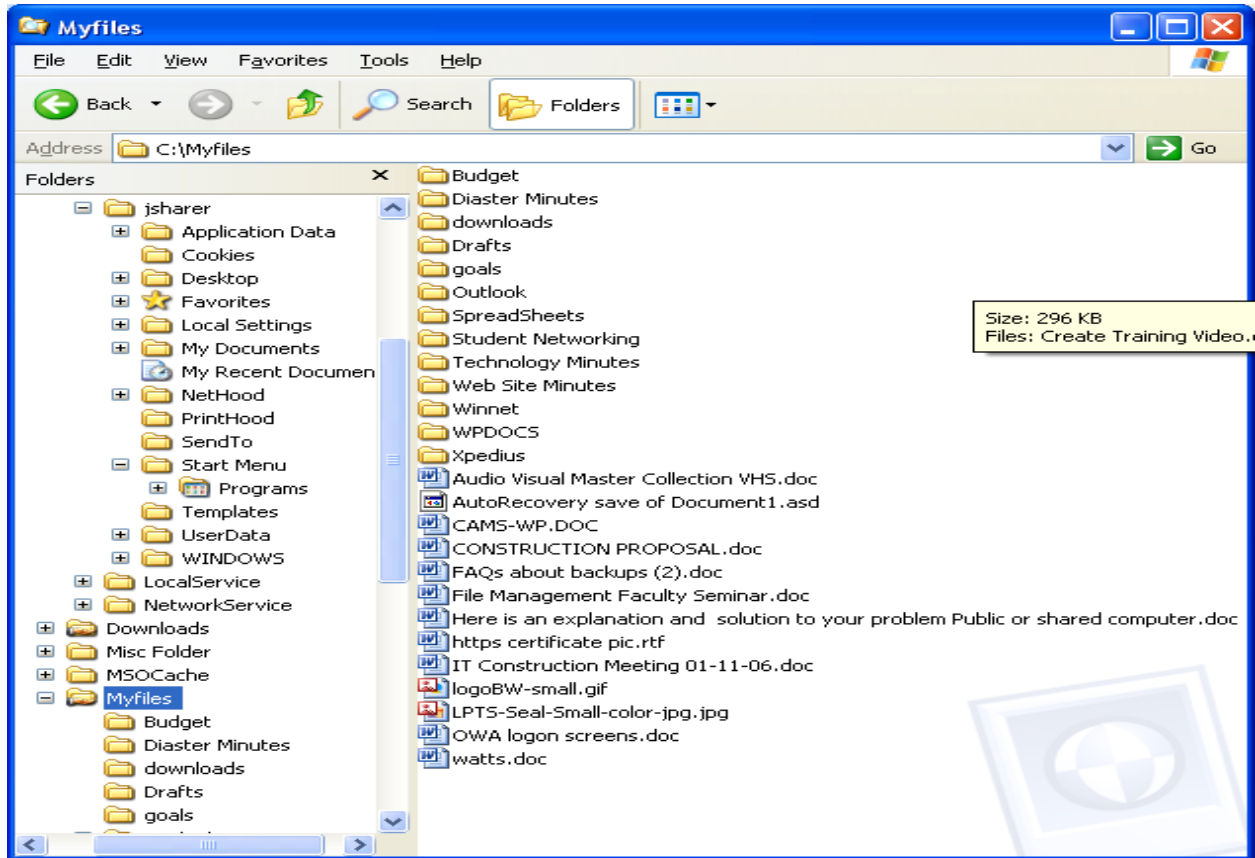
A commonly used analogy for file and folder structure on computers is that of a filing cabinet. Think of your hard drive as the cabinet, with directories as drawers, and sub-directories as the folders within the drawers. Inside of the folders may be other folders (sub-directories), and inside the folders reside the files. Just as throwing loose papers into a filing cabinet drawer isn't good practice, neither is placing electronic data files randomly on the computer's hard drive.

Viewing Data on a Computer

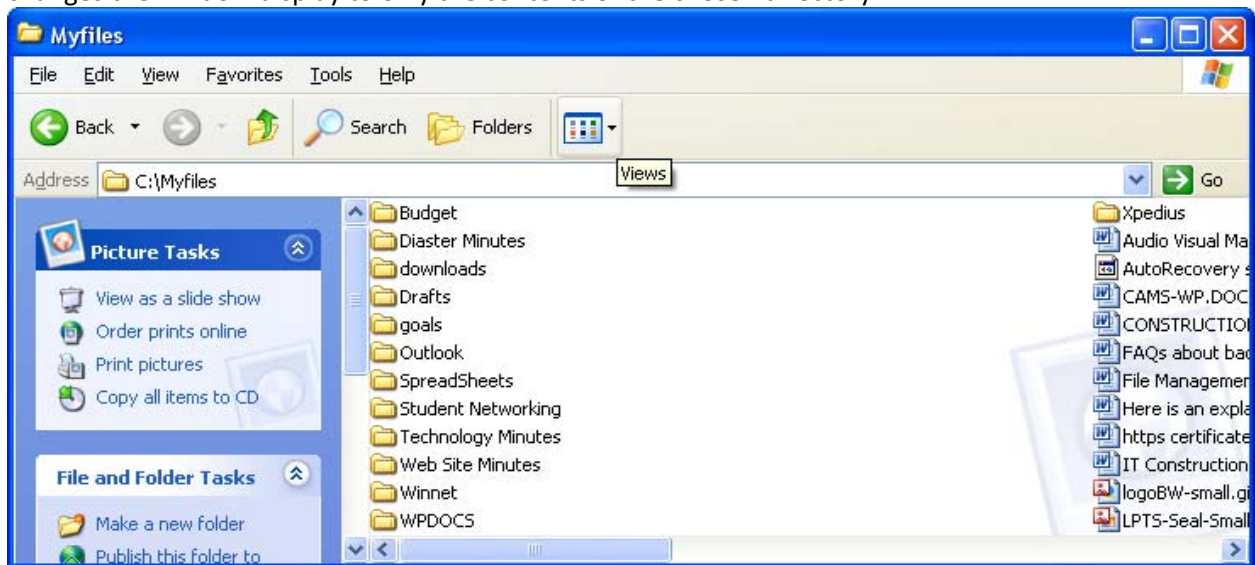
The most commonly used tools for managing files in a Windows environment are **Windows Explorer** and **My Computer**. Either tool can be used for operations such as viewing and creating folders, arranging files in folders, and deleting files and folders safely.

Windows Explorer provides a two-pane window view of your file and directory structure, while **My Computer** provides a simpler, one-pane view of files and directories. More importantly, **Windows Explorer** allows you to see directories and their sub-folders, by simply expanding or constricting a folder, without toggling back and forth between new windows, whereas using **My Computer** you will be able to see only the content of one folder that you have selected for display, and selecting another folder opens another window.

Windows Explorer provides a very useful view of your folders and files. The left hand pane in Windows Explorer shows a full view of all the folders on your computer's hard drive.



My Computer provides a less complex view of directory contents, in a single pane. To view directories above those currently displayed, click the **Back** button). Clicking on a directory displayed in the window changes the window display to only the contents of the chosen directory.



Creating New Folders

Check organizational guidelines regarding storing work related files and folders, and the allowed storage locations.

The following examples are based on the assumption that folders will be located inside of **MyFiles**.

To create a new folder inside of **MyFiles** using **Windows Explorer**:

1. Right click the **Start** button, select **Explore**.
2. Click on **MyFiles** in the Folder List Box to select it. The contents of **MyFiles** will show in the right hand pane of **Windows Explorer**.
3. From the **File** menu, select **New | Folder** to create a new folder inside of the **MyFiles** folder.
4. If the name New Folder is highlighted, you can just start typing the name of the new folder over the highlighted text. If New Folder does not appear highlighted, click on the folder once to select it, then right click, choose **Rename** from the **File** menu, and type a new name for the folder over the highlighted blue text.

Creating a new folder using **My Computer** is accomplished by the same steps as above, except that step one changes to:

1. From the **Desktop**, double-click the **My Computer** icon or click **start** and then **My Computer**.

Arranging Files in Folders

Windows Explorer is a good way to organize existing files and there are several ways to move, copy, and delete files using **Windows Explorer**. All that is required is that files to be copied, moved, or deleted are selected first.

Moving or Copying Files in Windows Explorer

- To select a single file in **Windows Explorer**, click once on the file, so that it is highlighted.
- To select multiple files not adjacent to each other, hold down the **Ctrl** key while clicking on each file you want to select.
- To select multiple files adjacent to each other, click to select the first file, then hold down the **Shift** key and click on the last file you want to select. All of the files between the first and last will be selected.
- To select all of the files in a folder, choose **Select All** from the **Edit** menu, or use the keys **Ctrl** and **A**.

Once files are selected, they can be moved or copied to the folders by using menus, keyboard commands, or drag and drop.

To copy or move selected files to another folder by using menus:

1. With the selected files highlighted in the right pane of **Windows Explorer**, from the **Edit** menu, choose **Copy** (to copy) or **Cut** (to move without leaving a copy behind).
2. In left pane, select the folder to copy the files into, and choose **Paste** from the **Edit** menu.
3. If, choosing to copy files instead of cut, be sure to delete the original files once they have been copied to the correct location.

To copy or move selected files to another folder by using keyboard commands:

1. With the selected files highlighted in the right pane of **Windows Explorer**, use the keys **Ctrl** and **C** to copy the files, or the keys **Ctrl** and **X** to move or "cut" the files.
2. In left pane, select the folder to copy the files into, and use the keys **Ctrl** and **V** to paste the files.
3. If, choosing to copy files instead of cut, be sure to delete the original files once they have been copied to the correct location.

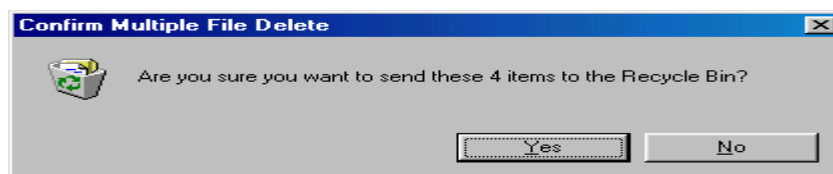
To move selected files to another folder by using drag and drop:

1. With the selected files highlighted in the right pane of **Windows Explorer**, click and drag the selected files on top of the folder in the left pane into which the files are to be moved.
2. When dragging and dropping files between locations on the same drive, the files are moved, so no files are left behind in the original folder to delete. If dragging files from one disk to and dropping them into another disk, such as from a hard disk to a floppy disk, a copy of the file is made, and the original file must be deleted once the move is successful.

Deleting Files and Folders

To delete a file or folder using Windows Explorer:

1. Select the file or folder. Multiple files or folders at once using the methods described above.
2. Choose **Delete** from the **File** menu, or hit the **Delete** key on the keyboard.
3. Windows will prompt to confirm the deletion with the message "Are you sure you want to send (filename) or (these X items) to the Recycle Bin? Click **Yes** to confirm the deletion.



Windows computers usually protect files deleted from the hard drive by placing them in a **Recycle Bin**. The deleted files remain in the Recycle Bin until it is emptied, so files can often be recovered that are accidentally or prematurely deleted. Once the Recycle Bin has been emptied, its contents are permanently deleted and cannot be recovered.

To restore a file or folder from the Recycle Bin:

1. On the Desktop, double-click on the **Recycle Bin** icon.
2. Select the file or folder to be restored.
3. From the **File** menu, choose **Restore**, or click the **Restore** option in the **Recycle Bin** window. Choosing Restore will put the file or folder back to its original location before it was deleted.

To empty the Recycle Bin:

1. On the Desktop, double-click the **Recycle Bin** icon.
2. From the **File** menu, choose **Empty Recycle Bin**.
3. Windows will prompt to confirm the deletion with the message "Are you sure you want to delete these X items?" Click **Yes** to confirm the deletion. Once items are deleted from the Recycle Bin, they cannot be restored unless you kept a backup of them in another location.