

COMPUTER TIPS



Where did all those photos go?

By Jack Wilfore

Do you find that when photos get transferred from your camera to the computer, that you feel like you have lost control? Well, that's a topic for another article, but for now let's see if we can't begin to gain back just a little of that control.

When photos go from your camera to your computer, it's really important to know exactly where they go and where they get "filed". There is nothing more frustrating than having your photos or other images or documents, or slide shows or letters get filed within your computer, and then you can't find them later.

Information on the subject of "File Management" is readily available on the Internet, especially from academia. Giving credit where credit is due, here are four excellent references, from which some of the following has been extracted.

College of Education at the University of Illinois File Management Tutorial

<http://ctcr.ed.uiuc.edu/tutorials/filemanagmt/>

Furman University's File Management or Where Did It Go?

<http://facweb.furman.edu/~pecoy/mfl195/tutorial/>

Duke University's Window's Explorer: Managing Your Files

<http://www.duke.edu/~dhewitt/tutorials/explorer/explor.html>

University of Virginia File Management

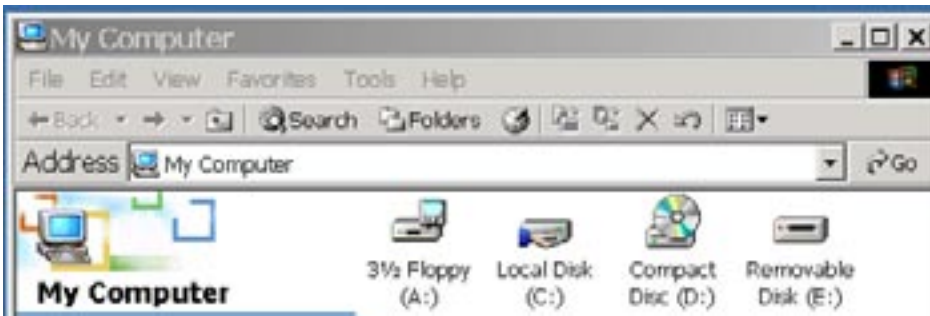
<http://www.itc.virginia.edu/desktop/docs/fms/pc/structure.html#hierarchy>

FILE MANAGEMENT

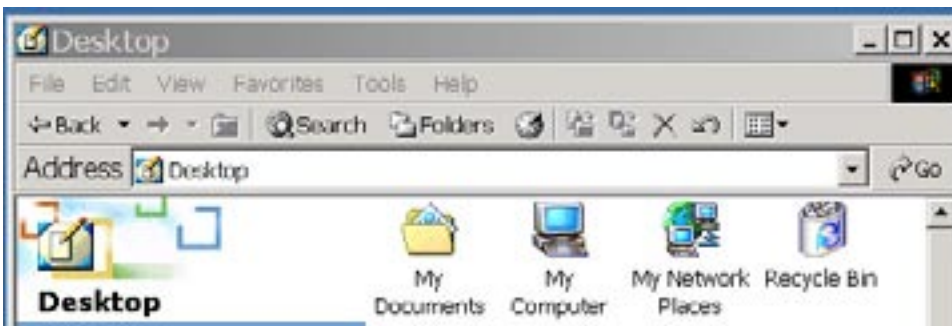
This brings us to the important topic of this article, "File Management". This title sounds a bit technical, there is a lot to it, but let's begin with the thought that your computer is nothing more than a big filing cabinet. With that said, now it will be up to you to decide where and how to organize your "files".

DISK DRIVES

Before we get to actually managing your files, a brief review of how your computer stores data. Computers store data on "drives", some drives are inside the computer and some may be external or outside of the computer. You probably already know that the "C" drive stores everything inside the computer, it is the heart and soul of your computer, and when you have a disk crash, it's usually your "C" drive and when that goes you are out of business. External drives may include an "A" drive for use of a floppy disk, and a "D" drive designated as CD-ROM drive which is for your CD's. Other external drives, also get assigned letter designations, could include removable or external drives such as zip drives, or memory cards, or docking stations, or cameras, etc. etc. If you click on the "My Computer" icon on your desktop, you can see these disk drives. You can also view what's on each drive by using your left mouse button to double-click on the A, C, or D icon.



Before moving on, I want to point out a few other things when you are looking at “Windows”. The top bar (usually blue) across the top of a window is the Title Bar, the next bar down on the above window is a Menu Bar, and the third bar down is the Task Bar. Now the reason I bring this up is I want to point out one very important icon, the UP icon, which usually looks like a folder with an up arrow. This little icon is critical for moving around within your file cabinet. Lets try it! If we left mouse click that UP icon, the next window we see is the Desktop, and



Within this Desktop window, we can see the “My Documents” folder, which is the cornerstone of the file management structure.

FILES, FOLDERS AND THE FILE CABINET

Recall that the “C” drives stores everything, specifically folders (which hold files), and files such as our photos, letters, and spreadsheets as examples. Now as these files come in, we just can’t let them go anywhere. Here is where you need to get yourself and your file cabinet organized.

Let’s review two key items:



Folders provide that organizational structure to a disk drive, just as they do in a file cabinet. First, you will put labeled folders into your cabinet/drive. Each folder will have a name. When you view the contents of a disk drive, folders are normally listed in alphabetical order. New folders can be created by right clicking on your desktop, and selecting New>Folder. The New folder Appears on your desktop with the blue title where you can now type the name you have selected for that folder. These folders can now be “dragged and dropped, wherever you want them!”



Files can be put inside folders, this is where you will put your documents. In order to be able to find your documents later within an overstuffed folder, you will give each document a name. On a PC, it is wise to use the following naming conventions for both folders and files:

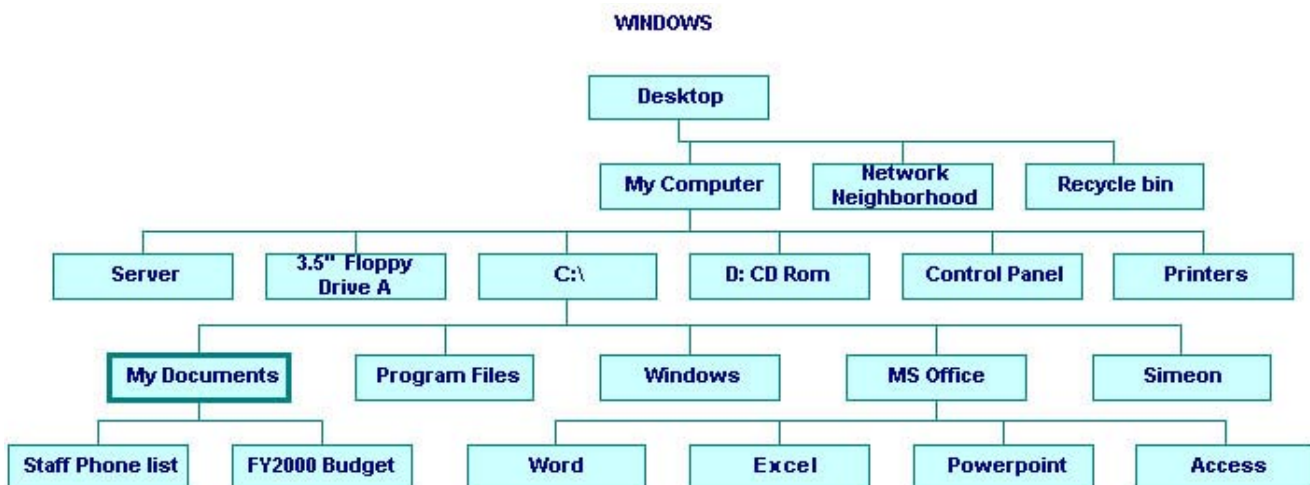
A file name is made up of two parts: (1) the name of the document and (2) the file extension which is usually assigned by the computer. If you don’t see the file extensions in Windows XP, go to Desktop>Tools>Folder Options>View Tab and then unclick “Hide extensions for known file types.”

You may name a file anything you wish (with some punctuation limitations), but it is preferable to name a file something you are likely to remember later. File names should be no longer than 8 characters whenever possible. Although Windows (and Mac) allow longer file names, you may get in problems while transferring files to other computers if you use longer file names. Also, use only letters and numbers in your file names. Special characters like “-”, “/”, “&”, or blank spaces must be avoided in the file name. The second part of a file name is the extension. In the file *text.doc*, the word *text* is the file name and the *.doc* is the extension. A period always separates the two. The extension identifies what kind of a document you have. Some examples of file extensions are:

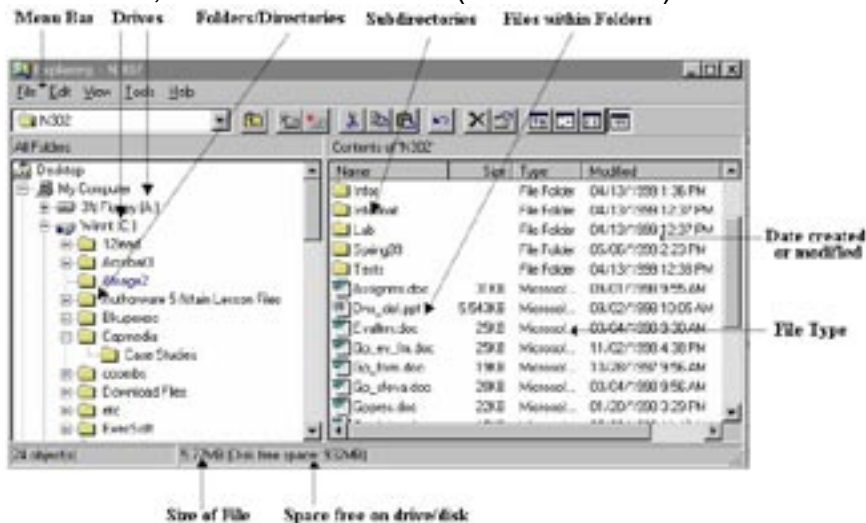
- .txt : plain text
- .doc : Microsoft Word Document
- .htm or .html : Web document
- .gif , .jpg , .bmp , tif , : images
- .ppt : PowerPoint Presentation

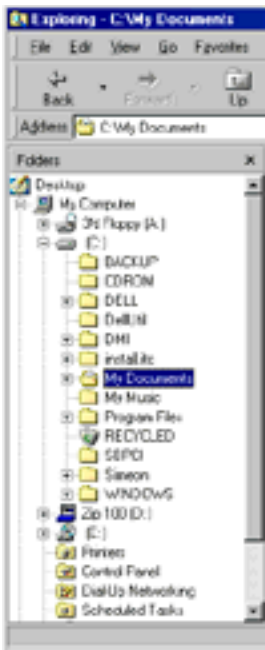
THE STRUCTURE

The File Management structure has a tree type organization or is hierarchical. And, you have the ability to set up that structure just as you would with your file cabinet in your office. Here is a graphic of one such structure ...

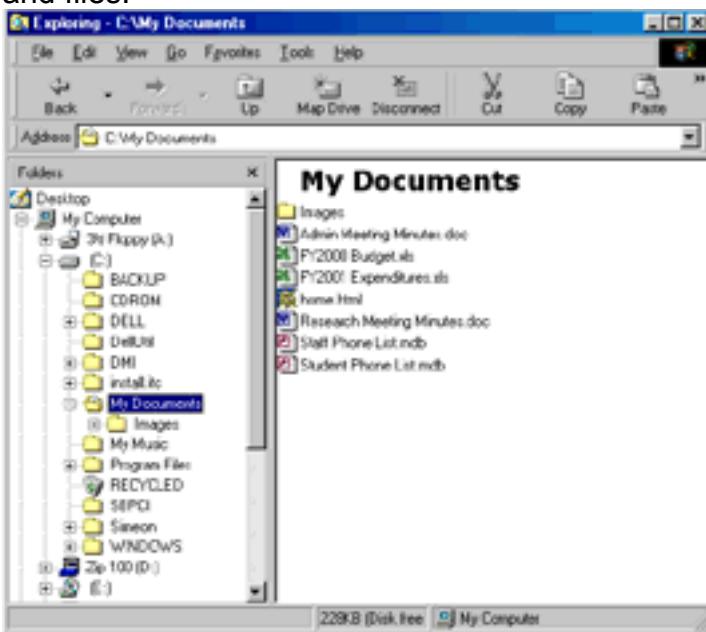


Windows Explorer (Start>Programs>Accessories>Windows Explorer) is one way of looking at the internal structure. The following screen capture shows many **parent** folders, also known as directories, with sub-directories (or sub-folders) and then files expanding beneath them.





In this example, clicking the plus sign beside **My Documents** expands the files and additional sub-directories inside, or beneath, My Documents. Clicking the minus sign collapses the sub-directories and files.



If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, please feel free to send Jack an email at jwilfore@hargray.com