

## FILE MANAGEMENT

This tutorial is probably the most important thing you will ever read as it teaches you how your computer is organized. It will explain terms such as files, folders & directories and then teach you how to find them. More importantly it'll teach you how to organize your files. An hour from now, you will feel like a computer guru and this will have made it easy.

## UNDERSTANDING COMPUTERS

Computers are fairly simple to understand if you get rid of all the big words. All a computer does is store information and then move it around. This is very similar to a library & a librarian. The library stores information. Just like a computer. The librarian finds information and moves it around. Just like your computer processor chip. When explained in terms of a library, a computer becomes very easy to understand. A library stores information like a computer & a librarian moves the info around like your processor chip. So what do you call the information on a computer and at the library? At the library information is stored in books. In your computer information is stored in files. (Gee, this really is easy). A Computer stores information, a processor moves it around, and the information is kept in files (that are like books).

## DISK DRIVES & FILE ADDRESSES

Now, let's walk into the public library and see how they store the books (information files). We see that there are several rooms: a BIG room and several smaller rooms. Most of the information files (books) are kept in the big room and smaller amounts of information are stored in smaller, less often used rooms. Your computer is set up the same way. It has big storage areas and small storage areas. On most computers the big (main) storage area is called your hard drive. BIG = Hard. Think of this as room "C" in the library. The big room in the library is "C" and the big storage area on the computer (hard drive) is referred to as the C Drive and is written as C:\. A library has many rooms: One big one and a couple of smaller ones. Well, your computer has "small" rooms too. These rooms are generally named A, B, etc. They are written as A:\ and B:\. These little rooms (drives) are called floppy disk-drives and they are where you can insert a small 3 1/4 inch disk.

**Lets Review:** A:\ or B:\ = Floppy 3 1/4 inch drive - small rooms; C:\ = Hard Drive - The big room.

When you walk into the library you see that all the information is in rooms. In each room the information (books) are stored on shelves. And each shelf has a name or number & each book has a name. Imagine if you went to the library and the shelves were not numbered & the books had no names. You could spend months looking for one book. But fortunately they have numbers & names. To find a book, you have to know the number of the shelf & the name of the book, and of course which room it is in. On a computer, it is the same. If you want to find a piece of information, you have to know which disk drive it is on (A:\, B:\ or C:\), which shelf it is

on (these are called directories or folders) and the name of the file (book). If you saw the following at the library you could find the book **Room C, Shelf 14, Book "Teddy"**. On a computer you would write it like this **C:\Shelf14\Teddy**. **C:\** means disk drive C; **Shelf 14** is the name of a folder; **Teddy** is the name of a file. OK, now let's say I was looking for a book in Room C at the library, the book was in a section called Downloads, and the book's name was "Happy Days" **Room C, Shelf Downloads, Book Happy Days** in computer speak: **C:\Downloads\HappyDays**. Now what happens if the shelf is divided into little sections (subfolders/ subdirectories)? We just add a word to make it easier to explain. For example: in Room C, I want you to go to the shelf named Downloads, look in the section called Today and find "happiness". You would write my directions like this...**Room C, Shelf Downloads, section Today, book about happiness**. Computer speak = **C:\Downloads\Today\happiness**. If you understand half of what you have just read, you are now officially either a librarian or a computer geek!

### Windows Explorer and File Manager

There are currently several types of software out there for IBM type machines: Several versions of Windows: 3.1(I don't think there are many of these still around), 95, 98, ME, XP and now Windows Vista. Each of these uses a program to help you find your files: Windows 3.1's 'File Manager' & newer Windows' 'Windows Explorer' are very similar. If you know how to use one, you know how to use the other. So to make things simple, I will only use the instructions for Windows Explorer Program for this tutorial. If you have the other program instead, you will still be able to do most all of what I am talking about here. OK, let's look at our filing system (It's like a card catalog at the library).

START	Click the <b>START</b> button in the lower left hand corner (a menu pops up)
PROGRAM	Click <b>ALL PROGRAMS</b> (Sometimes you have to click <b>ACCESSORIES</b> )
WINDOWS EXPLORER	Click the words <b>Windows Explorer</b>

Or, if you came to my last class:

Holding down the WINDOWS key,  quickly press & release the E key.

A screen pops up which has a line down the middle with **Drives, and Big Folders on the left, Subfolders & files on the right**. You can use the scroll arrows to go up and down to see the entire list of folders. At the top you may see disk drive A:, drive B: (if you have one), drive C:, and sometimes a few other drives and your CD ROM. Right now our only concern is Drive C:. Under drive C:, you will see yellow folders. They are the primary folders under disk drive C: (your hard drive).

An example of what you might see (just the basics) on the left side of the screen:

Desktop

```

|---MY Computer <--- (programs to change computer settings)
|-----|A:\                <-----Disk Drive A
|-----|C:\                <-----Disk Drive C (Main Drive) |
        |---- Downloads    <-----This is the Folder we spoke about
        |---- PROGRAM FILES <----- When you install a new program it is stored
here
        |---- WINDOWS      <-----This is where all your windows files are run
from
    
```

So, looking at this you could write the Downloads directory like this: **C:\Downloads**. Look at the diagram above & at this & you will see how they relate. Now one last magic trick: You can click on the folders on the left side of the screen and they will open. Only one folder can be open at a time, so to look in another file, click on it, the new folder opens, the first folder closes, and now you can see the contents of the new folder on the right. When they open you can see all the files that are inside them on the right hand side of the screen. **Now a word of caution - Never delete a file unless you know exactly what it is or your computer may never work properly again.**

### LOST FILES

If you have ever lost files because you installed a new version of AOL, here is a chance to find them. When you first install AOL, it creates a folder called aol70. If you later install a newer version of AOL (without first deleting the original) the computer creates a new folder called aol70a. The new AOL works, but your files may still be in the old version of aol70. This confuses your computer and it thinks the files have been lost.

```

|----- C:\                <-----Disk Drive C (Main Drive) |
        | aol70             <----- Original AOL where your files were saved |
        | aol70a            <----- New aol If you're missing files, you'll need to look
in your old aol70 and see if your missing files are in there. If so, you may want to move them to
the new aol70a.
    
```

### MOVING FILES

First open the folders and find them.

**Click on the folders on the left side of the screen.**

**Put your mouse on the file on the right side of the screen.**

**Click the left mouse button (keep holding it down).**

**Drag it to the new aol70a directory.**

**Let go of the mouse button and the file moves to the new folder.**

(If a file is in a subdirectory of aol70, move it to the same subdirectory of the new aol70a.)

**EXAMPLE:** c:\aol70\download\teddy.wav moves to c:\aol70a\download\teddy.wav

## **Why organize your files?**

Imagine going to a library where the librarian had one too many beers. She started just sticking the books anywhere she wanted and has now been fired for drinking on the job. You get hired as her replacement. Twenty people walk in and they all want you to tell them where to find certain books. Now you would be wishing and praying that the books had been put away in an organized manner. Let's try the same thing on your computer. When it comes from the factory, the files are organized. If you called the factory they could tell you where to find anything you needed to know, quickly and easily. Believe me, this is a good thing. Time goes by...you have been downloading files, but not keeping track of where they are. You have downloaded updated versions of your software several times as well as letters, pictures, .wav files (sound), & all kinds of other files while not really caring where you put them. Now, let's pretend you have a new job, the pay is great and your new boss had only one requirement. That you take some of your work home & place it on your own personal computer. The boss isn't being mean. She just wants to be able to occasionally ask your opinion on certain items (in emergencies). You agree, take home the files, download them, and never look at them again for 6 months. You are now leaving on vacation. The whole family is in the car. Everyone is excited. You are flying to Hawaii. It is the only flight available this week; If you miss it, no vacation. The boss calls, there is an emergency at work. Their system crashed. She needs to ask you just a few questions about the files stored on your computer. You say no problem, and then realize, YOU CANT FIND THE FILES! Is organizing important? Yes! You need to be able to find files later. But there are several more other important things to consider. If you run out of space and your files are unorganized you have to go through your computer one file at a time to delete only the ones you don't need any more. But if your files were organized in directories, you could simply delete all the files in directories you no longer use; One file at a time or fifty files at a time. Which one do you think is easier? Finally, organizing your files, in the manner I am about to show you, will help prevent you from losing files. Save you tons of work.

Probably the most common problem we see online is people having to update their ISP's (Internet Service Provider's) such as AOL (America Online). The current setup that comes with these programs such as aol70 is that your files either get directly downloaded to their main directory (On AOL that means files go directly to aol70, written as c:\aol70) or the files get placed in a subdirectory of your ISP directory usually called download (AOL files often get downloaded to C:\aol70\download). OK, so here is what happens. You want to download a file while you are online. When it goes to download it shows you a list of folders, and normally the choice they have selected for you is called download. This makes it easy. All your files go to the same place. But later this file has tons of files, becomes a mess, and if you ever update your ISP (AOL) to a newer version you may lose the files. Once you find them you have to move them to a new directory.

## **Lets begin organizing your files**

I am a strong believer in taking ten minutes to set things up once, & never having to deal with all these problems ever again. If you follow the instructions below, you will never lose a file, you will never have to move a file, and updating your ISP & deleting the older version will

have no effect. Most important, you can find any file in ten seconds. Here is a current look at how some computers look when viewed through Windows Explorer:

```

Desktop
  |--MY Computer                    <--- (programs to change computer
settings)
  |-----|A:\ <----Disk Drive A
  |-----|C:\ <-----Disk Drive C (Main Drive)
          |-- aol70                  <----- (This is the directory where aol is
stored)
          |-- aol70a
                |-- download          <---where new files are downloaded
                (files are downloaded to c:\aol70a\download)
          |-- PROGRAM FILES          <----- When you install a new program it is
stored here
          |-- WINDOWS                <-----This is where all your windows files are
run from
    
```

Newer computer have a Folder called My Documents and usually there is an icon (shortcut) to it on the desktop. What I am suggesting is that we rename the My Documents to “\_My Documents” on your computer to keep all of your personal files. The reason for the underline is that your computer stores files alphabetically and the underline comes before any of the characters so it will be the first folder. It will be at the top like this:

```

files
  |----- C:\ |
          |-- _My Documents          <---New directory where you will keep personal
          |-- aol70
          |-- aol70a
          |-- download
    
```

You can now see that if you deleted one of your directories such as aol70 or aol70a that your personal files would still be safely inside \_My Documents Isn't it much easier having all your files in one place where you can quickly find them?

To Create **C:\\_My Documents** <----Gee does that look easy to remember  
 Open up **Windows explorer**  
 Click on **C:\** <---it should be highlighted  
 Click on **FILE (from the explorer menu)**  
 Click on **NEW**  
 Click on **FOLDER**  
 On the right hand side of the screen a NEW FOLDER appears, backspace over the words “New Folder” and type **\_My Documents**.  
 Click on C again and that's it. You have a new folder.

If you share your computer with friends or family, follow the above steps and create "\_My Documents 02 ", "\_My 03 " etc. so each of you will have your own number directory to keep your files separate. Now you could download all your files here & you would know where they are. But I want to make it even easier.

Let's make some subfolders:

To make a subfolder of " C:\\_My Documents ", follow the exact same steps you just followed above, except start by highlighting "\_My Documents" instead of " C:\

Click on \_My Documents <---it should be highlighted

Click on **FILE** (from the explorer menu)

Click on **NEW**

Click on **FOLDER**

On the right hand side of the screen a **NEW FOLDER** appears, backspace over the words New Folder and type the names of folders you want to create. Repeat this process over and over with each folder name that you wish to create. One point here is using the "\_My Documents " folder is like putting everything in your desk drawer. You know where your drawer is and eventually you can find things, but if you name the folders in your drawer you can find things much faster. Here is a sample of folders "01" and subfolders that we use on our computers.

```
|---- C:\ |
      |---- 01
            |---- cartoons
            |---- jokes
            |---- movies
            |---- personal
            |---- pictures
            |---- software <---Download software to here (keep as a backup
```

copy).

```
|---- test <---download files here if unsure if you want to keep them.
```

**NOTE** - I recommend downloading all software programs to the **2 B Installed** directory and keeping the original zip or install files here. That way you have an emergency back up if your software has to be replaced. This will save you time, especially for large programs which take a long time to download.

As you can see it is very easy to find your files this way. The **TEST** folder would be good place to place programs that you might want to test and decide if you want to keep first. Finally, as you download files from disks or the Internet, you will want to put them directly into these files. It's easy, just look for Disk C, and folder "\_My Documents" will be the first folder you will see, and all the folders you just created will be there. You see, the librarian just sobered up, and started putting books back on shelves where you can find them and that will make your new job much easier.