

# Computer File Management

(using **Windows Explorer** — the “built-in” file management program)



**Note:** Do not confuse “Windows Explorer” with “Internet Explorer”, an Internet browser program.

1. To **open** Windows Explorer (five methods):
  - (1) Window key + E (*the quickest and easiest way*)
    - Note the name in Title Bar is “My Computer” – not Windows Explorer
    - Default view in XP is **Task View** – but **Folder View** is usually better (click on Folder icon)
  - (2) Start → My Computer (or My Documents)
  - (3) Click on shortcut icon for Windows Explorer, My Computer, or My Documents
    - Tip: To show **My Computer** icon on Desktop, go to Start and right-click on My Computer – select “Show on desktop”. (Use same method for **My Documents** icon.)
  - (4) Start → All Programs → Accessories → Windows Explorer
  - (5) Right-click on Start → Explore
  
2. Recommended settings for Windows Explorer:
  - A) Two basic views available, **Hierarchical** (tree) View (also called *Folder View*) and **Task View**
    - 1) To toggle between the views, click on the Folders icon.
    - 2) To make Hierarchical View *always* available (recommended): View → Explorer Bar → turn on Folders.
  - B) View → Toolbars. Turn on (*check mark visible*) the following: Standard Buttons, Address Bar, Lock the Toolbars.
  - C) View → turn on Status Bar. (*This is the bar at the bottom of the window.*)
  - D) View → Arrange Icons by → Name (*click to turn on*) – and turn off “Show in Groups”
  - E) View → Details (*This provides the most information.*)
  - F) Tools → Folder Options → General tab . . .
    - 1) Show common tasks in folders. (*default*)
    - 2) Open each folder in the same window. (*default*)
    - 3) Double-click to open an item. (*default*)
    - 4) Then, if changes were made, click Apply (otherwise just continue)
  - G) Still in Folder Options → in View tab → click Apply to All Folders → Yes
  - H) Still in View tab → click Restore Defaults. Then in Advanced Settings area, make the following changes:
    - **On:** Display the full path in title bar. (**Check Mark in box means “On”**)
    - **SHOW** hidden files and folders (**Note: This is optional.**)
    - **OFF:** Hide file extensions for known file types
    - Then, if changes were made, click Apply.
  - I) Close Folder Options by clicking OK.
  
3. Understanding the **Windows Explorer window**:
  - A) Terminology:
    - 1) **File:** Anything you might want to look at on the screen or print (typed text, spreadsheet, photo, etc.)
    - 2) **Folder:** a container for **related files**
    - 3) **My Documents:** the folder set aside for your personal use. (By default, it also contains the sub-folders **My Pictures** and **My Music**. Additional sub-folders may be created here.)
  - B) Window Explorer window is **divided** into two sections:
    - 1) **Left section** shows the **hierarchical** (tree) **structure** of drives and folders on your computer.
    - 2) **Right section** shows **contents** of the *selected (highlighted) item* in the *left* section.
  - C) Working in the **left section**:
    - 1) **Selecting** (clicking) an item (folder or drive) causes several things to happen:
      - a) Folder (or drive) becomes *highlighted*.
      - b) If the icon is a folder, it becomes an *open* folder.
      - c) Folder name is displayed in the *Address Bar*.
      - d) The **+** sign changes to a **–** sign and the folder’s sub-folders are displayed below it.
      - e) The *right section* displays the folder’s contents (both sub-folders *and* files).
    - 2) Note: When just clicking on the **+** sign (*and not the icon or name*), the folder is **expanded** (folders or sub-folders are revealed below) – but they are *not* displayed in the *right section*. To **collapse** a drive (or folder), click on the **–** sign.

- D) Working with the **right section**:
- 1) To adjust the width of the sections, drag the divider between the two sections.
  - 2) To change the column width in the right section, drag the column dividers in the heading bar.
  - 3) Sort contents by clicking on heading bar of a column. To reverse the sorting order, click the heading bar a second time.
  - 4) Six views available: Large icons, Small icons, List, Details, Thumbnails, Filmstrip. (*The Details View provides the most info.*)
4. It's important to **organize** the files you have created!
- A) Makes it easier to locate files, especially as the number of files increase.
  - B) Makes the "backup" process easier.
  - C) **Group** files into **folders** according to the **topic** – all within My Documents.
  - D) To position an often used file at the top of the list, begin the name with the numeral 1. (Example: 1Journal)
  - E) Consider creating a folder named **Downloaded Files** within your My Documents folder – and then use this folder as the destination for all downloaded files.
5. How to **create new folders** using Windows Explorer:
- A) Select folder where a sub-folder is desired
  - B) File → New → Folder
  - C) A new folder appears (with a temporary name) at the bottom of the right section.
  - D) While "New Folder" name is selected, type in your desired name for the folder — this will replace the temporary name. (Hint: If you click away from the new folder before renaming it, simply right-click it and choose Rename.)
  - E) To save the change, click Enter — or click in a blank area, away from the new folder.
6. To name and **save a new document** to a **specific** folder:
- A) Open a program – and begin creating the document.
  - B) Click File → Save.
    - 1) Look at "Look In" text box - the default folder listed here is where the program wants to place your document. (Most often the default folder displayed is "My Documents" – however, Win XP will display the **last used** folder.)
    - 2) You may want to put it into a different folder or a sub-folder of the My Documents folder.
      - a) Can select a different folder by clicking the drop-down arrow on the right end of the "Look In" text box.
      - b) OR click the "Up One Level" icon.
      - c) OR click the "Create New Folder" icon.
    - 3) Then click in "File Name" text box -- and type in a meaningful name for your document -- but allow the program to automatically add the extension.
  - C) While you work, save **OFTEN** by clicking the Save icon on toolbar (or File, Save -- or Ctrl+S). (Do not need to have a floppy disk inserted in the computer to use the Save icon on the toolbar -- it is just a *symbol* for SAVE.)
7. To **find** those "lost" files that you created but don't know where they are stored:
- A) Start → Search
  - B) Select *type* of file (if known) or "All files and folders"
  - C) Note contents of "Look in" box — usually you will want to select "My Documents".
  - D) To narrow the search, indicate specific criteria:
    - 1) If you know the name of the file, type it in the "Name" box.
    - 2) If you know only the beginning letters of the name, type them in the "Name" box and add a wildcard (an asterisk — \* ), a proxy for one or more other characters. (Example: sam\*.doc)
    - 3) "When last modified" or "Word or phrase in document" are additional criteria that may be used.
  - E) Then click "Search"
  - F) When results of Find are displayed, carefully note the file address.
8. Using Windows Explorer to **move** files (and/or folders):
- A) In right section, locate the file to be moved — click on it to Select it
  - B) In left section, locate the folder where file is to be moved (*but do NOT click to select*)
  - C) **RIGHT**-drag the file to new location (*Note: Can use LEFT-drag, but not as SAFE!*)
  - D) Then click on Move

- E) Tip: To select and move several files at once . . .
- For contiguous items, select the first one, hold down Shft key while selecting the last item in group.
  - For random items, hold down Ctrl key while selecting each item.
9. Using Windows Explorer to **delete** a file:
- A) Select the file and then click the Delete key -- or File, Delete.
- B) Use **caution** when deleting files! Delete **only** those files and folders **you created!**
10. Using Windows Explorer to **rename** files or folders: (other ways also available)
- CAUTION: Don't change the extension on the file name — this identifies the program used to open it. Also, only rename files or folders you created.
- A) Right-click on file or folder → Rename → type in new name. – OR –
- B) Select the file or folder → then press F2 → type in new name.
11. **Reversing** Move, Copy, Delete, or Rename in Windows Explorer:
- A) Use the Undo command (Edit → Undo – OR – Ctrl+Z)
- B) CAUTION: The Undo command must be used right away, before any other changes have been made.
12. Using Windows Explorer to make **Backup** copies of files you have created:
- A) Right-click the desired file(s); Send To; then select desired storage media.
- B) Or use the same method as Moving Files, except after RIGHT-dragging the file(s) to desired drive, select Copy.
- C) Note: The Windows Backup program is more involved – and we don't really suggest novices use it!
13. **Creating shortcut icons** to be placed on the Desktop:
- A) For shortcut icons to a *program*, use Start → Programs → locate shortcut to the program and right-click it → Send to → Desktop (create shortcut).
- B) For shortcut icon to a *specific folder or file*, use Windows Explorer → select file or folder and right-click it → Send to → Desktop (create shortcut).
- C) To rename a shortcut icon, right-click the icon → Rename → type in new name.
- D) Hint: Always remember to test a new shortcut icon.
- E) Shortcut icons may be deleted from the Desktop by dragging them to the Recycle Bin. (This step deletes only the icon, not the program, file, or folder connected to the icon.)

### **Suggested Exercises**

1. Practice opening Windows Explorer using the various methods.
2. Adjust the size of the left and right sections within the window.
3. Select a folder in the left section — and note the contents in the right section. View the contents of the folder using all view types (Large icons, Small icons, List, Details – and Thumbnail and Filmstrip). While in Detail View, sort the contents by Date (both forward and backward) and then by Name.
4. Create your own personal sub-folders within the My Documents folder (such as Letters, Addresses). (You might want to create additional folders within these new sub-folders -- example: within "Letters" folder, create "Business" and "Family" folders.)
5. Create a document in your word processor program, saving it into one of your newly created sub-folders. Be sure to give it a meaningful name.
6. Using Windows Explorer, practice renaming and moving files:
  - A) Locate the document file that you created in #5 above. Rename this file. (Remember NOT to change the 3-letter extension in the name.)
  - B) Now move this file to one of your other sub-folders.
7. Make a back-up copy of a file to a storage media (such as flash drive or CD).
8. Create a shortcut icon for a program you use often. Rename it, if necessary.

Web site with excellent explanations – [www.coolnerds.com](http://www.coolnerds.com)  
 (Info about File Management topics is located under "Win XP Camp – More. . .")