

Basic File Management

DEFINITIONS

Drive – The piece of hardware that holds and runs disks; used as a top-level location criterion for a file. Your "hard disk" or "hard drive" is usually designated with the letter "C," while your floppy disk/drive is usually named "A."

File – One document, one image, one something. In the world of computing, the terms “folder” and “file” are entirely separate, distinct, and noninterchangeable. Folders contain files; files cannot contain folders. Files are represented by various icons that indicate which program is used to open them:


File extension – The two or three or four letters after the dot in a filename. The file extension indicates what kind of file it is: its “format” or “type.” For instance, the file extension .exe refers to an "executable" file--in other words, an application. The file extension .html indicates a Hypertext Markup Language file--in other words, a web page. In My Computer or Windows Explorer, double-clicking on a file will open it *if* the file extension is correct. Some common file extensions:

- .doc – Microsoft Word document
- .wpd – WordPerfect Document
- .txt – Plain text document
- .htm, .html – A plain text document with added code that enables it to be read on the World Wide Web
- .jpg – An image file
- .gif – An image file
- .exe – An executable file, meaning an application/program/piece of software

Filename – The name of a file, including or not including its file extension.

File Size – The size of a file measured in bytes. A floppy disk holds about 1.5 Mb; a Zip disk holds 100 Mb or 250 Mb; a CD holds about 800 Mb; a DVD holds about 4,700 Mb.

- 1,000 bytes = 1 kilobyte (Kb)
- 1,000 kilobytes = 1 megabyte (Mb)
- 1,000 megabytes = 1 gigabyte (Gb)
- 1,000 gigabytes = 1 terabyte (Tb)

Folder – Also “directory.” A division of a drive into which you put files or further folders (which are then called subdirectories). In both Windows and Mac, a folder or subfolder is represented by an icon that looks like a manila folder: 

Path – The exact location of a file, including drive letter, directory, subdirectory, and filename, as in the following: C:\My Documents\TTSP\Basic File Management.doc .

MANAGING FILES IN WINDOWS

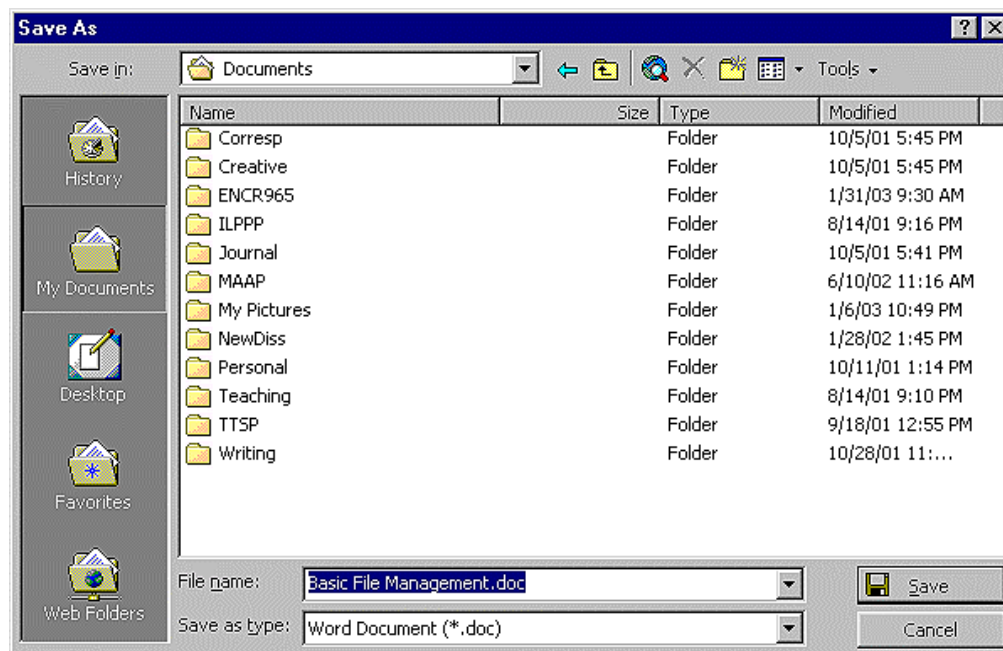
There are three ways of managing files in Windows operating systems:

- From within a program;
- By using My Computer; and
- By using Windows Explorer.

Managing files from within a program

When you choose “File” → “Save As” from within a program such as Microsoft Word, a dialogue box appears with three important features:

- “Save in” (near the top of the box)
 - A dropdown box that brings up your computer’s directory structure, to allow you to choose where to save your file.
- “File name” (near the bottom of the box)
 - Allows you to type in a name for your file.
- “Save as type” (at the bottom of the box)
 - A dropdown box that allows you to choose a format (type) for your file. The default file format will appear with the default file extension.

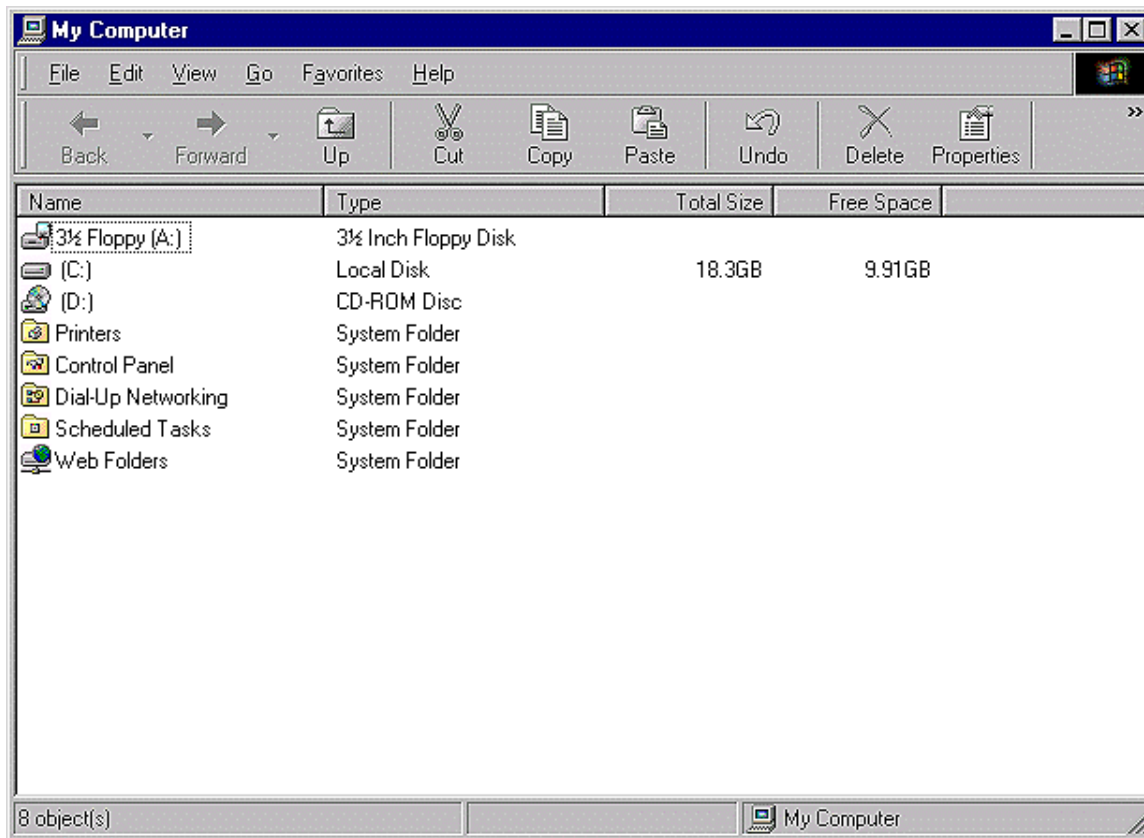


These three options also appear when you choose “File” → “Open” from within Microsoft Word, but they have slightly different names. Other programs will have the same three options, which again might have slightly different names.

Using My Computer



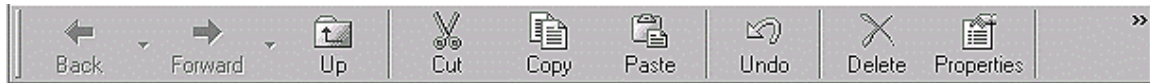
Double-clicking on the My Computer icon, which should be located in the upper left-hand corner of your desktop, will open a window labeled My Computer. From within this window, you can open, move, copy, and delete files; you can also create, move, copy, and delete folders. Double-clicking on any folder icon also opens My Computer, but you will see the contents of that directory rather than the contents of your computer.



- ❑ At the “top” level of the directory structure are the drives, differentiated by letters:
 - A:\ is your floppy disk drive
 - C:\ is your hard disk
 - D:\ is your Zip, CD, or DVD drive
 - J:\ is your Home Directory (your blue.unix.Virginia.edu account). This drive only appears when you have logged in to your Home Directory.

- ❑ Go to "View" at the top of the window to change the way files and folders are displayed within the window. There are four ways to view files and folders:
 - Large icons
 - Small icons
 - List – Choose this when you want to work with several files or folders at a time.

- Details – This is a good mode to work in when you want to see when the file was created, its size, and other important information.
- The toolbar has several buttons that enable you to work with files and folders:



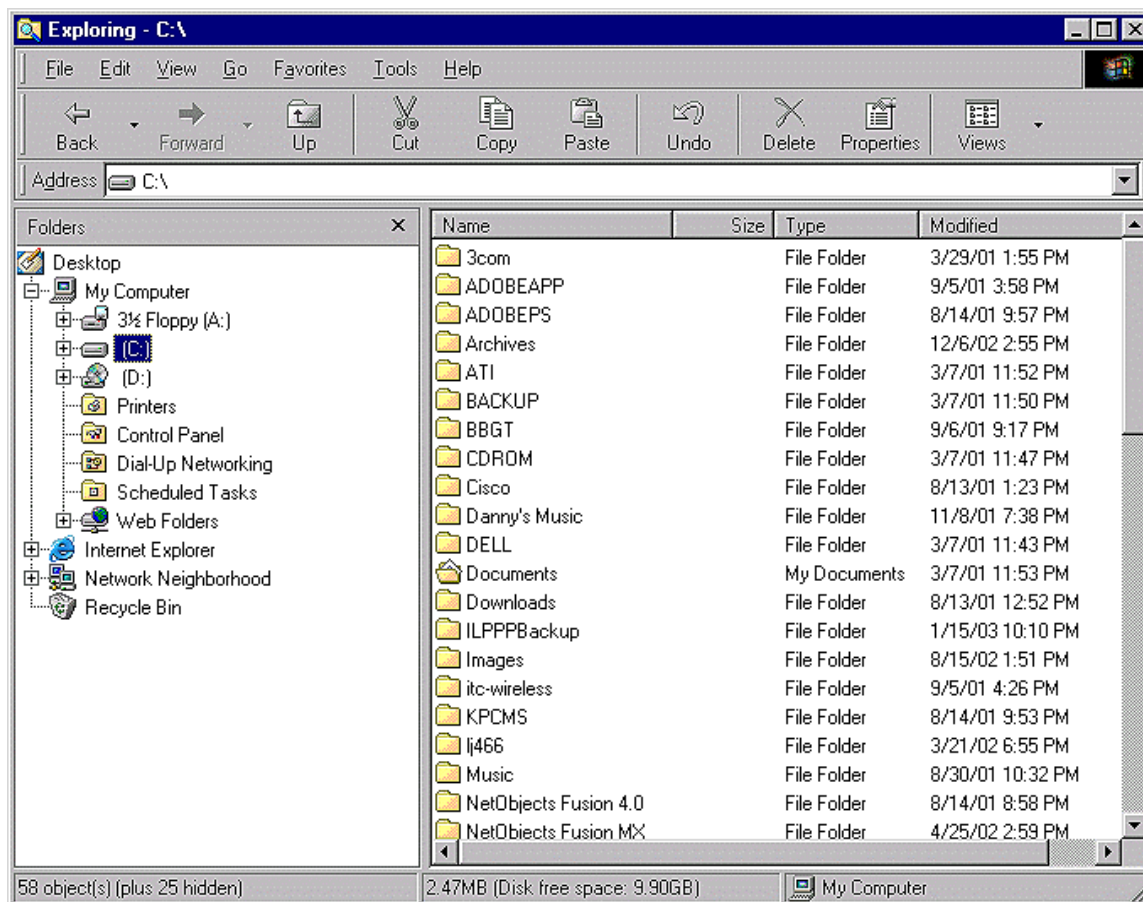
- Up – Choosing “Up” enables you to navigate through the computer’s directory structure quickly. Clicking on this button will change the contents of the current window, taking you “up” in the directory structure until you get to the highest level, at which only the drives are shown.
 - Cut – When you single-click on a file or folder to select it, it will be highlighted in the window. Choosing “Cut” will delete the file or folder from its current location and copy it to the clipboard so that it can be pasted elsewhere.
 - Copy – Choosing “Copy” will copy a selected file or folder into the clipboard so that it can be pasted elsewhere, but will not remove the file or folder from its current location.
 - Paste – Choosing “Paste” will paste a file or folder that is stored in the clipboard into the current location.
 - Undo – Choosing “Undo” allows you to undo an action that you have just performed. This is particularly useful when you have just deleted something you didn’t mean to delete.
 - Delete – Choosing “Delete” will delete a selected file or folder without copying it to the clipboard.
 - Properties – Choosing “Properties” will bring up a box that gives you information about a particular file or folder.
- To create a new folder in the current window, you can do one of two things:
 - Go to “File” → “New” → “Folder.” A new folder appears in the current window, and the folder name is highlighted that will allow you to name it.
 - Right-click anywhere in the current window (not on an icon or filename) and choose “New” → “Folder.”
 - Right-clicking on a selected file or folder will allow you to do several useful things, among which are the following:
 - Rename a file or folder by choosing “Rename.” A blinking cursor will appear in the file or folder name.
 - Create a desktop shortcut by choosing “Send To” → “Desktop as Shortcut.”
 - Copy the file or folder to a floppy disk by choosing "Send To" → “3 ½ Floppy (A:).”
 - Cut, copy, paste, or print a file.



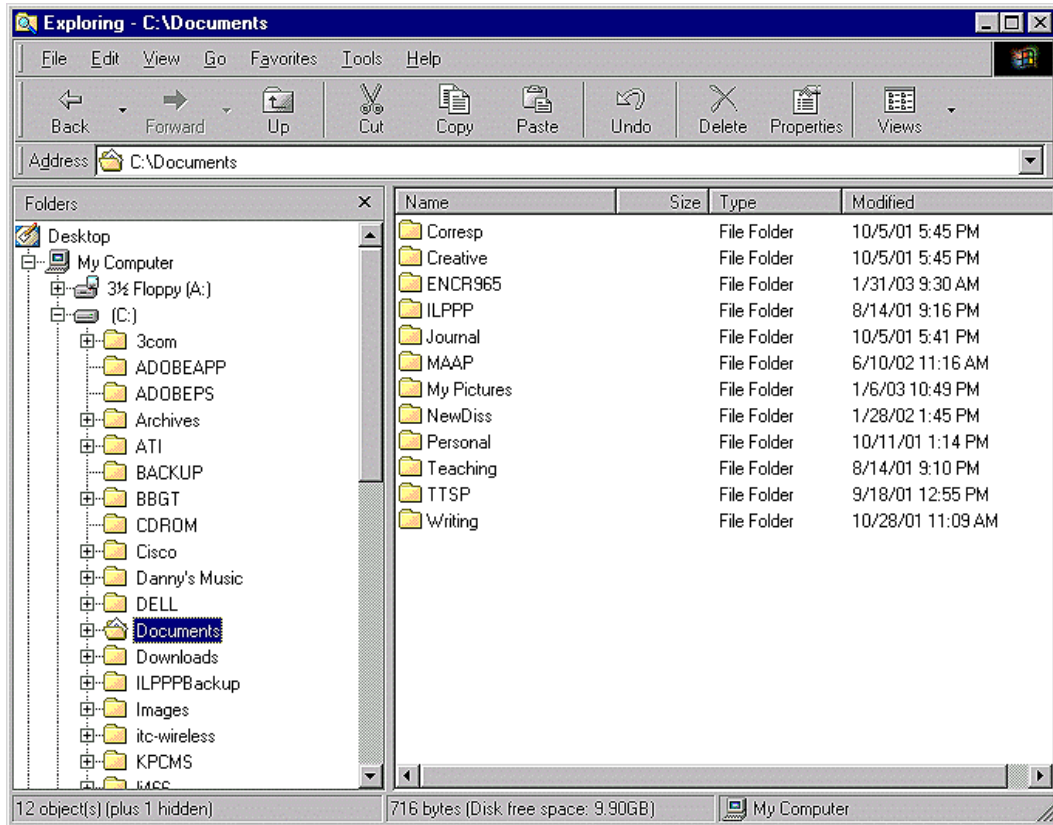
Using Windows Explorer

- ❑ In Windows Explorer, the entire directory structure is always available at all times in the left-hand pane. In this respect it differs from My Computer.
- ❑ Another difference between Windows Explorer and My Computer is that Windows Explorer allows you to drag-and-drop files and folders with the mouse.
- ❑ In the left-hand pane, drives, directories, and subdirectories are visible. To **expand** your view of the contents of a drive or directory, click on the + sign next to the directory name. To **collapse** your view of the contents of a drive or directory, click on the – sign next to the directory name.
- ❑ To see the contents of a drive or directory, click once on it (i.e., select it). In the right-hand pane, the contents of the selected drive or directory are then displayed. The right-hand pane functions just like the windows in My Computer.

In the example below, the drive C:\ is selected, and its contents are shown in the right-hand pane:



In the next example, the drive C:\ has been expanded, and the directory "Documents" has been selected. Its contents are displayed in the right-hand pane:



Sorting Files

You can sort files in My Computer and Windows Explorer by clicking once on the Name, Size, Type, or Modified header buttons. To sort the files with the most recent listed first, for instance, click once on "Modified." To re-sort them with the earliest listed first, click again on "Modified."

Name	Size	Type	Modified
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Working with More than One File

To select two or more separate files, hold down the "Ctrl" key and click on each filename. To select a contiguous group of files in a list, click on the first filename, then hold down the "Shift" key and click on the last filename. All files in between will also be selected. You can then perform cut, copy, and delete functions on all the selected files.

Locating Lost Files

Use the "Find File" facility of your operating system by going to "Start" → "Find" → "Files or Folders." A box will appear that will allow you to search for a file by name, by part of its name (use * as a wildcard character), by location, by date, by type, or by other criteria.