

# File Management in Windows

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## File Management Tips

- Keep all of your files in a central location/folder, using subfolders within it to organize the files. The clearer and more obvious your file structure is, the easier it will be to find your files.
- Develop and use a consistent folder and file naming scheme, taking advantage of long file names (you can use up to 255 characters, including spaces).
- Don't use your own file extensions (".xxx") – let the programs add them for you. Windows depends upon these extensions to know what type of file it is, and what program to use to open it.
- If you store important files on your hard drive or removable drives (flash drives, etc.), back them up on a different drive or disk. Network drives (M:, J:, & G:) are backed up by the IT department. For details, see the handout ***Backing Up Your Files***, at [http://www.snc.edu/techsupport/handouts.html?d=/File\\_Management+\\_Network\\_Resources](http://www.snc.edu/techsupport/handouts.html?d=/File_Management+_Network_Resources).
- Floppy disks are unreliable and have been phased out by computer manufacturers. Do not use them!

## Folders

- Folders help you to organize your files into logical groups.
- Just like in a filing cabinet, folders can contain individual files and other folders.
- To open a folder and see what's inside, double-click on the folder icon.
- To create a folder in My Computer, right-click in a blank area of the window and select New ► Folder, then type a name for the folder and press Enter.

## My Computer/Computer/Windows Explorer

Windows Explorer is the basic Windows utility for working with files and folders (moving, copying, renaming, deleting, etc.). Depending on your version of Windows, you may access this utility either through an icon on the desktop or from the Start menu labeled My Computer or just Computer. The first window that opens will display all available drives, and possibly some other items. To display the contents of a folder or drive, double-click on it.

There are several options on the View menu that control how the files and folders appear in the windows. To change the look of the display, experiment with the various options on the View menu. The Details option offers the most information about files. Use the Arrange Icons menu choice to sort the files and folders in different ways, making it easier to find what you need. More advanced options are available on the Tools menu, under Folder Options, on the View tab.

## Copying Files

When a file is copied, there are then two copies of it – one in the new location and one in original location. To copy a file:

- drag the file(s) to the new location with the right mouse button, release the button, and choose Copy Here  
OR
- highlight the file(s) you wish to copy, choose Copy from the Edit menu or the right-click menu (or press Ctrl+c), then navigate to the new location and paste the files by choosing Paste from the Edit menu or the right-click menu (or press Ctrl+v).

## Moving Files

When a file is moved, it goes from one location to another – there is still only one copy of it. To move a file:

- drag the file(s) to the new location using the right mouse button, release the button, and choose Move Here  
OR
- highlight the file(s) you wish to move, choose Cut from the Edit menu or the right-click menu (or press Ctrl+x), then navigate to the new location and paste the files by choosing Paste from the Edit menu or the right-click menu (or press Ctrl+v).

## Deleting files

To delete a file that you no longer need, highlight it and press the Delete key on the keyboard.

### Recovering deleted files

If you delete a file from your hard drive (C:), you can get it back by double-clicking on the Recycle Bin icon, clicking on the file, and choosing Restore from the File menu. Files deleted from your hard drive remain in the Recycle Bin until you permanently erase them or the Recycle Bin become too full. Files deleted from floppy disks and network drives (M:, J:, G:) are deleted immediately – they do **not** go into the Recycle Bin. Once you delete these files, you will not be able to get them back! (If you accidentally delete a file from the network, contact the Help Desk. We may be able to restore the file from backups.)

## Working with more than one file at a time

- To manipulate more than one file at a time, hold down the Ctrl key while clicking once on each file.
- In order to manipulate an entire list of files, click once on the first file in the list, scroll down to the bottom of the list, and hold down the Shift key while clicking once on the last file in the list.
- Any action you take (cut, copy, move, delete) will apply to all files which are highlighted at that time.

## Naming and renaming files

Windows file names can be up to 255 characters long, including spaces and some punctuation.

To rename a file, right-click on the file name or its icon, choose Rename, and type in the new name. Do not change the file extension (.xxx), or Windows will be unable to tell what kind of file it is and will have trouble opening it.

## Finding files

If you can't find a file, you can search for it. In Windows XP, go to Start ► Search ► For Files or Folders. Searching by file name, if you know it, is the fastest, but if you don't recall the file name, you can also search by date or by text contained within the file. In Windows 7/Vista, click on the Start button and type your search into the search box, which will automatically search by file name and text contained within the file. To limit by date, you must open a Windows Explorer/Computer window, click on the search box in the upper right and choose Date modified.

## Shortcuts

To make opening frequently used programs, files, or folders more convenient, you can create shortcuts for them on the desktop. First, locate the file or program through the Programs menu or the My Computer/Windows Explorer window, then right-click on it, drag it to the desktop, and release the mouse button. From the menu that appears, choose Create Shortcut(s) Here (if that option isn't available, then choose Copy Here). Once a shortcut is created, you can place it anywhere you like on your desktop by dragging it, and rename it by right-clicking on it and choosing Rename (by default, they always start with "Shortcut to...", which you can delete if you wish).

*Hint:* The arrow in the corner of an icon means that it's a shortcut (as opposed to the original file).

## File and folder sizes

When you highlight a file in the My Computer window, its file size is displayed at bottom of the window. The size is also displayed in the Details view, and may appear if you hold your mouse over a file without clicking.

Unfortunately, the only way to see the size of a folder and its contents is to right-click on it & choose Properties.

## Using network drives

The network has drives for file storage that work much like those on your computer. For more information, see the handout *Network Drives*, available at <http://www.snc.edu/techsupport>.

## Assistance and questions

If you have any questions or need more information, contact the Help Desk at (920) 403-HELP (4357) or [helpdesk@snc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@snc.edu). The Help Desk is for St. Norbert College students and employees only.