

Where to store your files

When you put hard work into a paper or project, you want to be able to store it safely and trust that you can access it when you need it. You also frequently need to be able to carry files from one computer to another, such as when you write a paper on your personal computer, and you want to print it out in a computer lab.

Floppy Disks

Floppy disks are becoming obsolete, and for good reason. Floppy disks are a **very unreliable** storage device – they're cheap and highly susceptible to data loss and corruption. People who use floppy disks frequently lose work because their disks go bad. If you want your files to be safe, don't use floppy disks at all, and **never** rely on a floppy disk for your only copy of something. We strongly recommend that you use USB flash drives or network storage drives instead for more reliable file storage.

USB Flash Drives

The newest, most reliable, and convenient removable storage devices are USB flash drives. They're so small that you can put them on your keychain or in your pocket or purse, and are very easy to use – just plug one into a computer's USB port and you can copy files to & from it just like a floppy disk. Just be sure to click on the "Safely Remove Hardware" icon (in the lower right corner, by the clock) before unplugging it. (With some models you may not need to do this – check the manufacturer's instructions.)

There are many brands of flash drives available, and they come in a variety of capacities, from 16 megabytes (MB) to several gigabytes (GB). Flash drives can be purchased at most office supply and electronics stores. Because these drives are small, you have to be careful not to lose them. And even though flash drives are much more reliable than floppy disks, you still shouldn't rely on them to store your only copy of something.

M drive/network storage

The M drive is your personal storage space on the College network, which you can access from any computer on the Internet. The M drive quota for students is 100MB.

Why use your M drive?

- **Reliability:** Network drives are more reliable than any type of removable storage (disks, etc.). They almost never fail, and if they were to fail, the Help Desk would be able to restore them from backups. Because the IT department backs up the College's network drives every weeknight, lost or damaged files from network drives can be restored from previous days if necessary. Because of this, your M drive is a good place to store your only or primary copy of something.
- **Security:** Network drives are more secure than hard drives or any type of removable storage (disks, etc.). Access to all network drives is controlled by network access privileges, set by the IT department. No one else can access your M drive*, making it a secure place to store your personal files (unless you walk away from a computer on which you are logged in).

*Professional staff members in the IT and Technology Support Services departments are able to access your M drive for the purpose of assisting you with problems. They never access your personal files without your knowledge.

Accessing your M: drive

When logged in to the College network (when in a computer lab or campus office), access your M: drive by selecting the drive that starts with your login ID, e.g., Duckdf on 'Cluster1-user-server\User\Users\Staff' (M:). On a Mac, use the Users alias on the desktop or in the launcher (it may be called Student Users or Faculty/Staff Users). You can create, copy, move, and delete files and folders on this drive just as you would on any other drive.

When not logged in to the College network (in a Res. Hall room or off campus), you can access your M: drive by using NetStorage, the web-based interface to network drives, or NetDrive, a program you install on your computer to allow you to access network drives. For instructions, see the handouts **Accessing Network Files Using NetStorage** and **Accessing Network Files Using NetDrive**, or for more information about network drives in general, see the handout **Network Drives**, all available at <http://www.snc.edu/techsupport>.

CDs/DVDs

You may also choose to store your files on CDs, if you have a CD burner, or DVDs, if you have a DVD burner. CDs have a large capacity (650-700MB), are relatively inexpensive, and are quite durable, but they are not as convenient to use as USB flash drives. CDs are particularly good for backups of large amounts of data. All computers in all campus computer labs have CD burners. There are 2 types of CDs that can be burned: CD-R disks can only be burned once and cannot be written over; CD-RW disks (slightly more expensive) are reusable CDs that can be burned, and then later erased and burned again.

Assistance and Questions

If you have any questions or need more information, please call the Help Desk at (920) 403-HELP (4357), contact us via e-mail at helpdesk@snc.edu, or stop by the Help Desk in Cofrin 101. The Help Desk is for St. Norbert College students and employees only.