John Stevenson

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By John Stevenson

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An Overview

Organization, categorization and grouping of files and folders are important parts of your daily work. Understanding these concepts within Windows will help you to be more productive and efficient.

Picture a filing cabinet with folders inside. Perhaps some folders have other folders within them and maybe each folder has documents.

This is much like our structure for Windows file management. You have the ability to organize these folders, sub-folders and files with names (Tabs) so that you, or someone else, can logically find the documents or folders needed. Logic is the key to success.

Windows Explorer

The primary tool used for file management is Windows Explorer. Shown in the figure below are the basic parts of this window.

Drag and Drop Favorites   **Breadcrumb navigation**   **Context Sensitive Tools**   **Search Bar**   **Views**
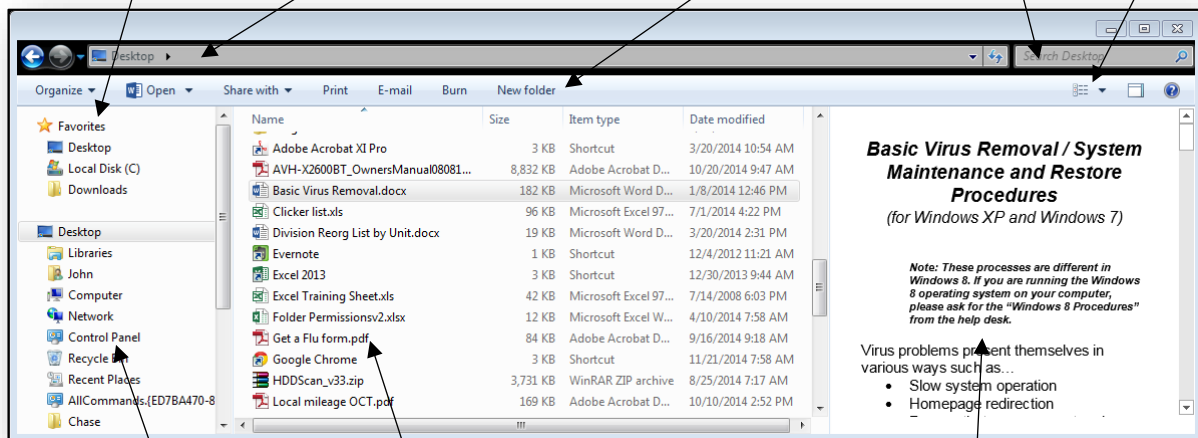
Navigation Pane   **Files and Folders**   **Preview Pane**

Navigation Pane

Use the triangles in the Navigation pane to open up sub-levels of Drives and folders.

Libraries

By default Libraries includes Documents, Music, Pictures and Photos. Libraries doesn't care where they are located. It will search out these items and present them from anywhere on your computer based on the associated file extension.

Files and Folders

Note that the Files and Folders area shows what is inside of the **drive** or **folder** you have selected in the Navigation Pane. (The Navigation Pane will never show files.) Drives are noted by letters such as: C:, D:, etc. If you add an external drive or flash drive it takes the next letter.

Preview Pane

Instead of having to open a document in its related program you can easily see the contents within the Preview Pane. This is a very quick way to ensure you have the right document or version when they are similar.

Drag and Drop Favorites

From within the Navigation Pane you can drag and drop drives, folders or even sub-folders to the Favorites area. This will make it easier to navigate within your hierarchy.

Breadcrumb Navigation

This is another way to navigate through your drives, folders and files. By using the arrows you can easily move from one level to the next.

> ▶ Computer ▶ Local Disk (C:) ▶ Downloads ▶ Acronis Trueimage2015

You can also see the "File path" (**C:\Downloads\Acronis Trueimage2015**) by double-clicking the Breadcrumb Navigation bar. You can also right-click the bar to copy the path, edit or delete history.

Context Sensitive Tools

These tools change depending on the choices you make in the Navigation Pane and include things like Burn, Share, Properties and Uninstall programs.

Search Bar

Finding files is an art. Keep in mind there are a number of ways to find files. You can search for them by name, date, file type or even size. You can find files, folders or programs. The search begins at the level or folder currently selected and will search through it and all sub-levels.

Views

This drop down provides views of the folder/file structure base on:

Extra Large/Large/Medium and Small icons
This is an excellent way to view file types or photos.
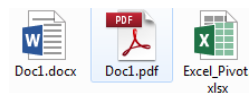
List View
See more folders and files in a compact layout.

Details View
You can see modification date, size and much more about individual files and folders.

Tiles and Content
These two views merge parts of each of the above views including some details and icons.
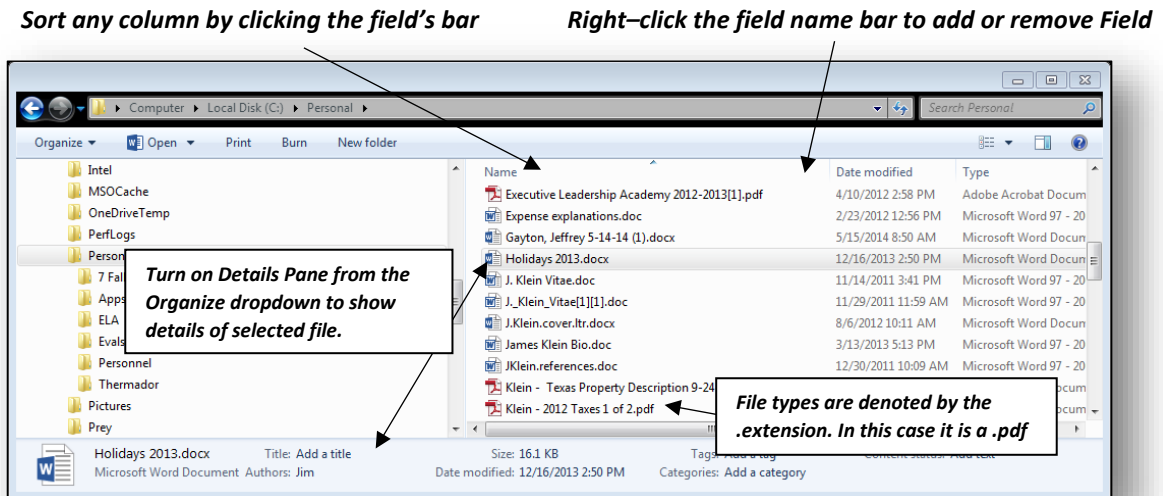
Screen Tips

If you hover over an icon or tab on Windows Explorer it will pop-up a screen tip that describes the action that will occur when using that item.

Resizing parts of the window

You can resize any area (Navigation Pane, Files Pane, Details Pane or Preview Pane by hovering over the border until you see a double-headed arrow and then left-click and drag it to the size you want.

Details about Details (View)

Sort any column by clicking the field's bar   *Right–click the field name bar to add or remove Field*

Turn on Details Pane from the Organize dropdown to show details of selected file.

File types are denoted by the .extension. In this case it is a .pdf

Note: Folders look like folders and files have icons showing the program they are associated with (Word, Excel, Adobe pdf, etc.

How To:

A look at creating, deleting, copying, and moving folders and files; creating short-cuts and other tips.

Create a New Folder

Select the level and/or area in the Navigation Pane to which you want to add a folder and click on the **New folder** label on the **Tools bar**. It will create it with a title of New folder and highlight the name allowing you to rename the folder to a more appropriate name.

Delete a Folder or File

Select the folder or file and then right-click and select **delete**. This places the file or folder in the **recycle bin**. It is held there until you **empty** it. If you find you need the file or folder back you can right-click the **recycle bin** and choose **restore**. It will put it back in the same location from which it was deleted.

Copy or Move a folder or File

There are a couple of ways to do this. You can select the folder or file and right-click and choose **copy** or **move**. Or you can right-click and drag the folder or file from the Files Pane to the Navigation Pane and then choose **copy** or **move**. Note: I don't recommend left-click and drag since it may copy or it may move; you don't have a choice.

Shortcuts

Shortcuts may be created for the desktop or to send to someone else; making it easy to locate a file or folder.

Create one in Windows Explorer

Right-click the file or folder you want a short-cut for and then click on ***Create shortcut.*** Once it is made you can copy and paste it where ever you want (desktop as an example) or send it to someone. Just be sure they have permissions and access to the drive or folder it is in.

Deleting a Shortcut

You can delete a shortcut. I will not delete the program or file to which it is associated. It is only a pointer to the location of the item. Look for the arrow (as shown here) to identify a shortcut icon.


Do's and Don'ts

- **Do** create shortcuts on your desktop pointing to files and folders on your external drives.
- **Don't** save files and folders to your desktop. They should be saved to your storage drive (Personal or Departmental) since those are backed up nightly by IT. Your local C: drive is not and if there is a loss of data you can't get it back.
- **Do** save your attachments from emails before working on them.

Organizing Files using two Windows

Create two Windows Explorer Windows

1. Open Windows Explorer from the Folder icon on the task bar.
2. Left-click the title bar while dragging the mouse to the left edge of the screen. When the cursor touches the edge of the screen it will create a half-screen window.
3. Now right-click the file icon on the task bar and click Windows Explorer. This will create another instance of it.
4. Left-click this window on the title bar and drag it to the right side of the screen until the cursor touches the edge. This creates another half screen window right next to the other one (as shown below.)
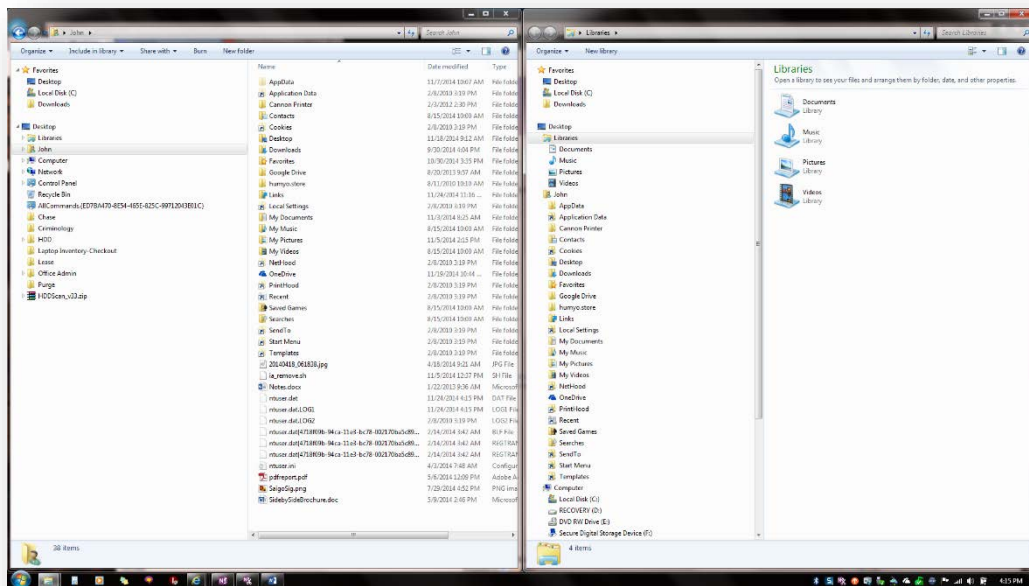
Drag and Drop folders or files

You can now open one window to the area you want to put files and the other to the files you want to move and right-click and drag them from one area to another. This gives you a menu to Copy or Move the files. This is great for backing up files to prevent data loss or putting them on a flash-drive to take on the road.

Save and Save-As from Program Dialog Box

Now that you understand the Windows Explorer, you'll recognize a similar window in the Save and Save-As dialog box. As shown here; it has the same layout and many of the same capabilities including the navigation pane, files pane, and ability to create and delete folders and files.
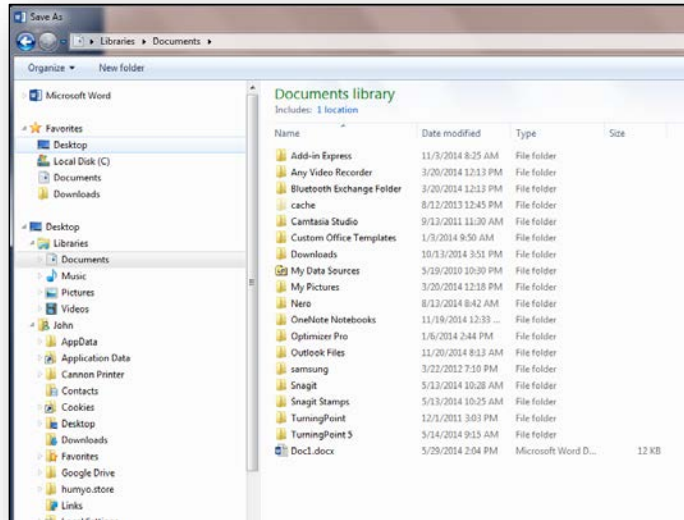
Where Did My Files Go?

There are a couple of instances where people sometimes can't find their files.

1. They download a file in Internet Explorer, Firefox, or Chrome and have no idea where they went. In this case look for them in the Downloads folder. This is where they usually go by default. You may want to check this folder occasionally to prevent a buildup of program files from filling up your hard drive.
2. If you ever lose a file while dragging and dropping you can almost bet you accidentally dropped it into the wrong folder. Either check nearby folders or use the search bar to find the file.
3. Always save your attachments from emails to a storage location before working on them. If you don't and you just click "save" it appear to have saved but really didn't because it is a temp file you are using. Once the file is closed the temp file is deleted.

Renaming Files

Sometimes files are automatically created with strange names (like photos you take with a cell phone). When this happens you can select all of them and then create a name that relates, such as Summer Vacation Photos. When you right-click the highlighted files and rename them to that it adds (1), (2), etc. to the end of the file name.

Notes: