

Navigating the folder System

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Navigating the folder system

Using XP and or Vista

A BJ tutorial

Introduction

We need to appreciate the way the folder system is set up in order to find a file within the system.

A computer can be likened to an office, it has a desk, filing cabinets, and folders. Essentially the desk is the computer and the first screen or window that comes up is referred to as the desktop.

We can think of the various storage devices as our filing cabinets and in these cabinets we store our documents. The main cabinets or storage devices on a computer are;

- Internal
 - Fixed Hard drives
 - CD / DVD drive
- External
 - USB Drives
 - External hard drives

Any document, picture, data that is stored on a computer is given a unique name and is known as a file. For instance if I save this document to the computer hard drive I will have to name it, in this case its called 'Navigating the folder system'. When I transfer pictures of my camera to the hard drive each picture is given its own name. When we want to find this data we do so by looking for the individual file names.

Let's get back to our Cabinets or in computer terms our Drives. The various storage devices are given names and the names that are used come from using letters of the alphabet. One of the first devices that was used on a PC (personal Computer) was the floppy drive and it was called the A drive. If we had a second floppy drive it was called B. Then along came the hard drives with much greater storage size and this was called C. So we have;

- A Floppy drive
- B 2nd floppy drive
- C Hard drive

The next device we add to the computer will take on the next letter in the alphabet. If you now add a CD/DVD it will become D. If I then plug in a USB (universal serial bus) drive it will become Yeah that's right E and so on.

Some camera card readers are multiple readers and when you plug these into a USB port on your computer you often get multiple drive letters appearing. If we continued from above my card reader will give me the Letters F, G, H, and I.

Floppy drives have become old technology and are rarely used nowadays, so most computers will have drives like this;

- C Hard drive
- D CD/DVD

The average hard drive is also getting much larger so you may have a computer that shows two hard drives like so;

- C Hard drive
- D Hard drive
- E CD/DVD

You should be getting the idea by now, our 'filing cabinets' are called C, D, E etc and this is where we store our programs and data in the form of files.

If you are on a network (many computers linked together) you may have letters such as Z or Y or X which indicate server computers. Traditionally letters used for such computers start at the other end of the alphabet and work backwards.

The computer allows us to access our files using a system of navigation. There are a few different ways of find a file but the same principles will apply regardless. You may be trying to find a file using a program such as your word processor or you may wish to organise your files by using the OS (Operating System). Either way the process is similar.

Let's think of the filing cabinet system again – we have the cabinet, folders, and files. The computer is the same. We have drive C, then in drive C we have folders, and in the folders we have the files.

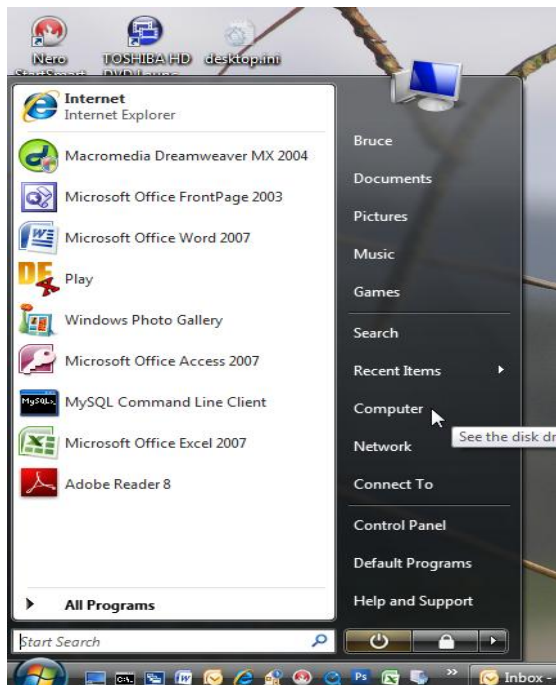
So from the desktop Click on the start button to bring up the option for My computer as shown below.

My Computer



Let's look at this *My Computer* and the folder structure of the hard drive where ALL our files are kept. To access My Computer click on Start – Click on My Computer from the list on the right of the Window that opened.

Diagram 2

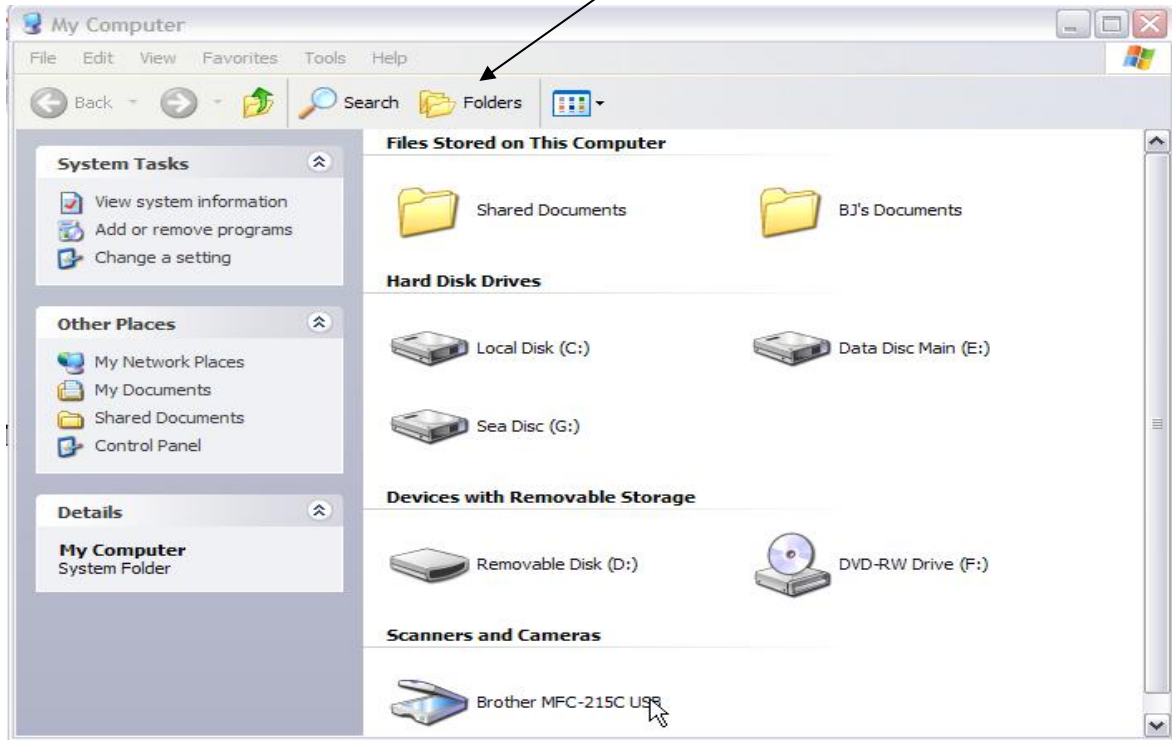


Windows Vista is very similar but just uses the word Computer instead of My Computer, See Diagram 3.

Diagram 3

The My Computer or Computer screen shows us the structure of the way the files are stored on the computers hard drive. Initially the screen shows us System Tasks and other information in the window on the left but if we click on the folders icon in the task bar we get a hierarchical listing of the files on the computer

Diagram 4



Features of folders and files

We can add new folders, rename, delete (use with caution), copy, paste, and move.

File types

Each program has a particular file type which is the default for that program. The file type or format is a consequence of the particular attributes and settings of the program. For instance MS Word, the word processor, saves its files in the .doc format. Features of the program such as font size, paragraph settings, justification options, page layout, bullets, style sheets, and many more, are saved in the file along with the text data. Likewise the program Adobe Photoshop has its native file format, which is .psd file format.

Three letter file extension

In previous OS's file names were only allowed to have a maximum of 8 characters in the file name. They also consisted of a three letter file extension which identified the file type. We

might have had for example a file name like mypictu1.jpg. Nowadays we are not restricted to files names of eight characters (although that's all the actual machine code uses) but we still have the file extensions. These file extension are used by the system for various reasons. They can also be used by us for easy identifying files and searches although they are becoming somewhat superseded by icons. You will come across them though, often in the Save As options in programs. The .jpg indicates that it is a picture file. A .psd is a Photoshop file. A .doc is a MS Word file. A .docx in a MS Word file the 07 version. Then are many more for every file type has a three letter file extension. Run files can be .exe (execute), .com (command) .bat (batch).

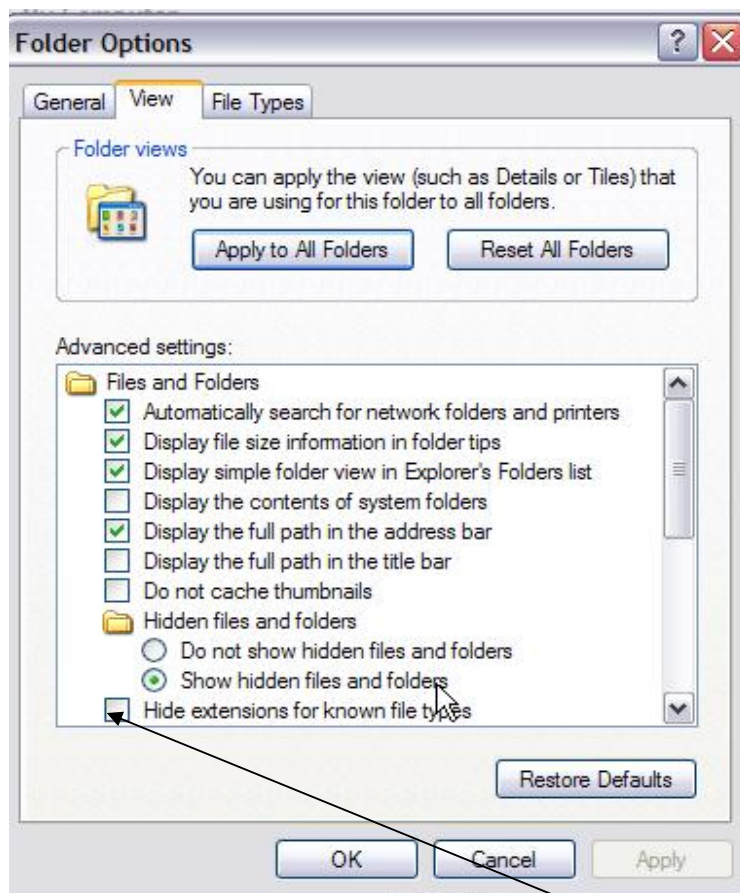


Diagram 6

The option to see file extension is not turned on by default. You can turn it on by going to 'my computer' then select tools – folder options - view – uncheck the hide extensions for know file types.

Using the Windows Folders

Windows sets up a folder structure on the C drive which contains a folder called My Documents. Under this folder there are folders called My Pictures, My Music and so on. Unless you specify otherwise Windows will save you files in these folders.

Selecting files

To be continued

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