

Organizing Your Computer

Most people, when they pay a bill, file the bill away in a folder in a file drawer, appropriately labeled. The computer works the same way. You can organize your files in a *file drawer*, only the drawer is electronic.



My Documents

First, how do you get to your file drawer? Windows has already given you a *starter* folder called *My Documents*.

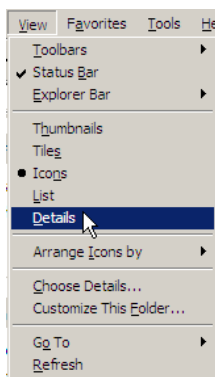
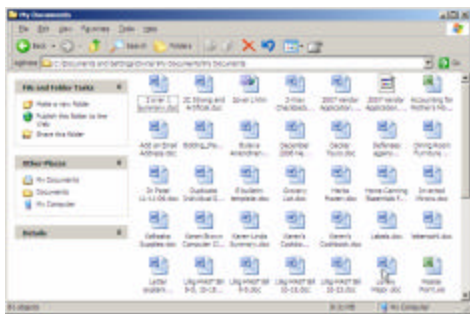
You'll find an icon (a shortcut) to it on your desktop. Double clicking it will open up a *Windows Explorer* view of it (don't confuse that with *Internet Explorer*—they're two different things!). You can also click the *My Computer* icon to get a *higher level* view of what's on your computer.



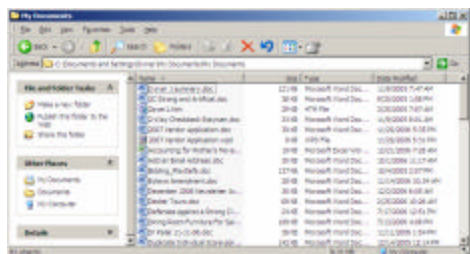
My Computer

Tip: You can easily open *My Computer* by pressing the Windows key (⊞) + E.

When you open *My Documents*, you'll see everything in the folder.

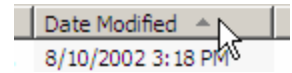


You're probably looking at the *Icon* view unless you've changed the view. In that view, you can't see when a file was created—and you sometimes can't even see the full name of the file. To see a more detailed view, click the **View** menu and select *Details*. You'll see the file name, size, type, and the date you last modified it.



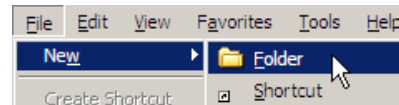
If you want to see your folder *structure*, click the Folder button on the toolbar, which will show you the same view you would have seen if you had started with *My Computer*.

To change from an alphabetical listing of your files to a listing of when they were created or last modified, click *Date Modified*.



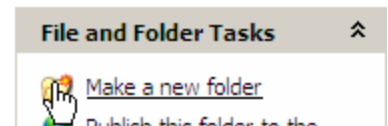
You can start your organization by deleting files that you know you no longer need—although those files will become apparent to you as you create folders and move files into them.

To create a new folder, click the **File** menu, select **New**, then select **Folder**. You can also *right click* within the file listing to see the same choice to create a new folder.



Tip: When you **left-click** your mouse, you perform an *action*. When you **right-click** your mouse, you are presented with *choices*. Try it!

You will also see a choice to *Make a new folder* in **File and Folder Tasks** if you're showing that view in Windows Explorer.



Once you select *New*, a new folder will appear with the words *New Folder* **already highlighted**. All you have to do is type in the name you want to give the folder.

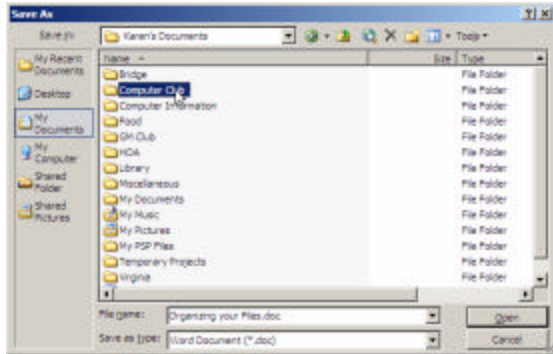
Now you're ready to start organizing your files. Find a file you want to move into the folder you just created, click one it **once**, and simply drag it into the folder. Continue to do the same thing with other files that you want in that folder. Then you'll be ready to create another new folder for your next set of files.

Tip: You can grab several noncontiguous files at once by holding down the **Ctrl** key. When you are ready to move the files into the new folder, let go of the **Ctrl** key and drag the files. Try it with just a couple of files first to get the hang of it.

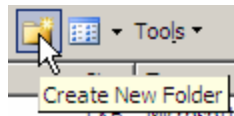
Saving New Files to a Folder

Now that you're organized, you want to stay that way. Thus, you want to save all new files that you create to a logical folder.

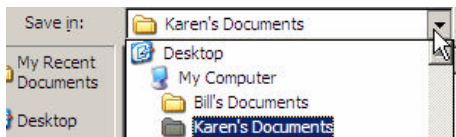
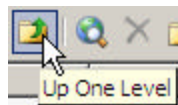
In Microsoft Word or Excel, when you save a new document, you are asked to name the document. At that time you can also select the folder in which you want to place the document.



If you have an existing folder, double click it to open it, then click **Save** to save your document in that folder. If you want to create a new folder for your document, click the *Create New Folder* icon in the **Save As** dialog box. Name the folder and save your document in it.



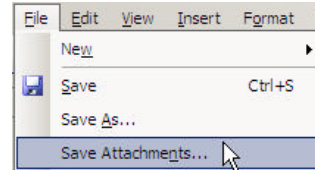
The **Save** (or **Save As**) dialog box offers you several ways to navigate through your folder structure. To move up to a higher-level folder, click the button shown to the right. You can also click the dropdown arrow (shown below) to navigate to a different folder. Plus the menu at the side will take you to *Desktop* or *My Documents* and so on.



Saving Files from Mail

The same procedure used to save files that are on your computer can be used to save documents or pictures from your email program. If you use a Webmail server such as AOL or Yahoo, open the document or picture and choose **Save As** from the **File** menu. You can save them in an existing folder or create a new folder.

If you are using a mail client such as Outlook Express, or Outlook, select **Save Attachments**.



If you're trying to save a Word, Excel, or picture file, you'll get a dialog box similar to the one for saving new files described above. Just navigate to the folder in which you want to save the file. You can even change the name of the file. You have to be careful, however, to make sure that you retain the extension for the file (e.g., *.doc*, *.xls*, or *.jpg*).

A Final Word on Saving Files

When you save a file, you should try to give it a unique enough name so you can distinguish it from other files—and so you can easily identify it again. For example, *Letter to Mary Jones 10-25-06* is much more descriptive than *Letter to Mary*. Your computer doesn't charge you for the number of letters in your file name!