

Chapter 3

Viewing Files and Folders in My Computer

Files and Folders

File: primary unit of computer storage, collection of related information stored on a disk, comprise nearly all computer work.

Two types of computer files:

1. Program files:
 - called application/software packages, software, or apps.
 - used to solve problems.
 - do specific tasks.
 - instructions for computer to follow.
 - have predetermined names.
 - usually have .exe – executable program.

2. Data files:
 - called documents or document files.
 - contain data created by user using application programs.
 - data can be altered/viewed only within program that created file.
 - named by user.

Computers and application packages purchased to help users with tasks.

Application packages fall into generic categories, such as word processing or spreadsheet programs.

For application programs to work you need:

1. Windows XP Operating System
 - Reads and writes program/data files to and from disks and memory.
 - Compare WXP to office manager.

2. Program files
 - Used to create and edit data.
 - Stored on disk when not in use.

- Directs application to write information to disk as a data file.
- To execute program WXP locates and places file in RAM.

3. Data files

- Can view/alter data in application that generated data.
- Core of docucentric approach.
- Because RAM is volatile user directs program file to save created data. Program turns this job over to WXP.

A name is assigned to each file to help WXP locate/retrieve file.

- Program files have predetermined names.
- Data files are named by the user.
- Rules for naming files:
 1. Unique name
 2. 1-255 characters in length
 3. File name has two parts that are separated by a dot:
 - File name describes and identifies file
 - File extension identifies type of data in file. File extension referred to as file type.
 - Program file assigns file extension to data file.
 4. Cannot contain the following characters: \ / : * ? " < > |

Organizing Files

Disks are divided into folders (directories).

1. Folders = containers for objects (files).
2. Folders may contain subfolders (subdirectories).
3. Related files stored in labeled folders.

Primary directory created when disk is formatted.

1. Called root directory.
2. Symbol “\” (backslash)
3. Additional folders/subfolders created under root. WXP name for subfolders is subdirectories.

Primary directory (root) created when disk prepared to store information.

- Symbol is backslash.
- Create additional folders and subfolders for storing related files under root.

The Hierarchical Structure – Files and Folders

The My Computer icon opens windows.

Way to locate files/folders.

Open window displays:

1. Disk drives on computer
2. Printer folder
3. Control Panel folder

Open Drive C:

1. Displays all folders/files on Drive C.
2. Double clicking Windows (folder in window) displays OS files/folders.
3. Each folder opened – dependent on folder above it.
4. Multiple level structure forms hierarchy; top level – root directory of C. Work way down from root directory.

Viewing Files and Folders

My Computer is used to locate:

1. Disk drives
2. Files
3. Folders

The Default settings for viewing/browsing files/folders in My Computer are:

1. Status Bar off.
2. Standard Buttons toolbar on with Text Labels on appearing on the right.
3. Address Bar toolbar on.
4. Toolbars locked.
5. Explorer Bar off.
6. Tiles arranged by Name with Auto Arrange on.

Can customize the view and browsing settings.

Files can be viewed as:

- Tiles, Icons
- List, Details, Thumbnails
- Name, Size, Modified, Type (file extension)

WXP automatically arranges icons in rows/columns along invisible grid.

The My Recent Documents Menu

Windows XP is docucentric.

- Document menu displays the last 15 documents you worked on. New items replace the least recent items.

Before, the way to view data was the program approach:

- Open the program file.
- Search for the data file from the program.

Now, the way to view data is the docucentric approach.

- Start/Documents/Actual file

Taskbar and Start Menu Properties sheet contains options to manipulate Start and My Recent Documents Menus.

Registering File Types with the Registry

WXP uses docucentric (document centric model). Emphasizes work done not tools used.

To locate a document:

Program model: open application program and locate and execute document.

Docucentric model: Double click document icon. One step opens program and loads document.

Docucentric model works because Windows XP:

- Associates file with specific application program.
- Uses file extensions to designate file types.
 1. File types determine actions computer can take.
 2. File types and their associated action are defined (registered) in the Registry Files.

The Registry

A database program that stores:

1. Property settings information.
2. Application program information.
3. Specific computer information.

The Registry centralizes and tracks all of the above, data file extensions that an application assigns, the icons that represent the program and its data files, which data files belong to which programs and other file-oriented information.

When double clicking a document icon in Windows XP will:
Checks Registry and opens program (based on file extension).
Places any opened, registered data file on My Recent Documents menu.

Registry Editor

Windows program (regedit & regedt32): user can change registry files;

It is very dangerous to edit the Registry directly. The system could not be booted if Registry files are incorrectly edited.

Registering File Types

In order for a document to appear on the Document's menu, the file extension must be put in the Registry. The Registry is a database program that keeps track of what data files belong to what applications.

When you install a Windows XP program, the program registers the extensions it uses in the Registry.

When saving a data file created by a user, the user can add the file extension or the program assigns the file extension if none is indicated.

Need organizational scheme for managing and locating/retrieving files.

File extensions assist in locating/retrieving files.

- Programs assign same extension to each data file associated with the program.
- User can register meaningful extension.

Better solution to combine program and user extensions.

For example, Jones.let.doc, the file name informs what data is in the file and what program created them.

Reasons for registering a file type:

1. Exchanging documents with one user using WordPerfect for DOS – other user using WordPerfect for Windows.
2. Want specific file type to be associated with new installed program.
3. Programs come with Read.me text file and can assign .me to Notepad and can use icon to open.

Can register file extensions:

1. Without using Registry.
2. Without using File Types dialog box.
3. WXP provides a GUI way of registering file extensions.