Chapter 6
Using My Computer and Windows Explorer

A Disk's Hierarchical Structure

All files are stored on and retrieved from disk.

Types of disks:

1. Floppy disk
2. Hard disk
3. Disk in removable drive
4. Network disk

Disk capacity:

Network and Hard disks have large capacities.
CD-ROM's have large capacities, usually read from not written to.

Drives:

Letters of alphabet followed by a colon reserved for drives.
If you do not tell your program on which drive to save a file, it will assume the default drive.
There is always a default drive.

Folders:

You can manage files/organize disks with folders.

1. Folders and directories are synonymous.
2. Directories have a tree-shaped (hierarchical) structure.
3. The tree begins with the root directory.
4. Other folders can branch out from this root.
5. Folders can themselves have folders. Within folders – files/documents.
6. You have to follow the hierarchical path to get to a file.

A file is saved or retrieved from a specific disk location.

1. You can save to the root directory.
2. It is best to save to a folder.

3. A backslash "\" denotes a folder when it is found in path name.
   - The first "\" = root directory.
   - The second "\" = delimiter (separates folder/file name from one another).
   - "\" is never part of file name.
   - "\" in path name denotes folder.
4. To retrieve a file you need to know the file's location (drive and folder it is stored in). To identify the correct file/folder, need unique names. The File/Folder names can appear to be identical, but not if path followed is different.

   Search – in past, used to locate/retrieve file.
   Useful if name of file/folder known
   Disadvantage – time consuming – searches entire disk/directory structure for file.

Uses of Windows Explorer:

Windows Explorer allows you to quickly find the drive and folder you want. **Do not confuse with Microsoft Internet Explorer**.

1. Locate files/folder on disk/network drives.
2. You can browse drives to:
   - Evaluate files/folders for deletion/manipulation/backup.
   - Reorganize files and folders.
   - Launch application programs.

Windows Explorer is My Computer with a different view and a different starting location.
When in Folders view, My Computer/Windows Explorer – best of both worlds.
Can browse drive/folder to see what file contains.
Browsing through drives useful to evaluate files/folders that are candidates for deletion or backup.

Can use My Computer and Search to launch application program and open data files.

Windows Explorer

Explorer looks nearly identical to My Computer in List view. Major difference between the two is Windows Explorer window opens by default in folders view and starts with My Documents as the starting location.

- ❑ Left pane is the hierarchical structure.
- ❑ Right pane displays contents of the default drive or folder from the left pane.
- ❑ **Right pane exactly like My Computer.**

New elements in Windows Explorer:

1. Folders pane
2. Contents pane
3. Current default path
4. Disk drive icon
5. Default folder
6. Split bar

Moving Around the Tree Pane

Can expand and contract folders.
Tree side –

1. Plus sign in front of folder
   - Subfolders beneath it.
   - Subfolders not visible.
2. Minus sign in front of folder
   - Expanded hierarchy displayed.

Maneuvering in Explorer window:

- Use mouse/keyboard.
- Maneuver in tree/contents side.
- Navigational arrows – move between previously viewed folder windows.

Opening More Than One Folder Window

Advantages of using a graphical interface to manage files/folders:

1. You can open and see multiple files/folders at the same time.
2. You can compare contents of files/folders on same or different disk drives. Analyze organizational scheme and manipulate folders/files from one directory window to another.

To see multiple folders (with their files) – launch multiple copies of Windows Explorer or My Computer. Open windows can be tiles/cascaded.

Logical and Physical Views of your Computer

Logical View

Windows XP presents a logical view of your computer.

- ❑ The Desktop is the logical view.
- ❑ On the desktop are icons representing important Window functions.
    1. My Computer – what's on computer
    2. Network Neighborhood – what's on network
    3. Recycle Bin – wastebasket
    4. Internet Explorer – way to connect to the Internet
- ❑ The logical view is best when working on predetermined projects.

- ❑ Logical view adheres to docucentric paradigm.
    1. Interested in documents not programs that created them.
    2. Programs needed to create/edit/or view document.

My Computer (with folders option off) is a classic example of the logical view.

1. Displays logical (not physical) contents when opened.
2. Icons look like physical items. Disk drives represent logical contents; i.e. files, folders, documents and programs stored on these drives.

My Computer window contains shared Document folder and folder named "your name".
My Computer is not stored as an executable file – to run it, run Explorer.exe.

Physical View

Windows Explorer gives a physical view of what files and folders are on your computer and where they are located.

- ❑ It provides a map to the physical locations of folders and files.
- ❑ Gives a hierarchical structure and path name.
- ❑ Stored as a program in Windows folder that can be executed/run.
- ❑ The physical view is best when setting up shortcuts and other technical types of tasks.

Both logical and physical levels are important and necessary.
The view you use depends on the task you are trying to accomplish.
Logical view: used to open drive, window, launch program, open document.
Physical view: must know physical location of files/folders.

When you want to do certain tasks you cannot use logical view.

1. Change the Start menu – (add/delete items).
2. Add/Delete items to a menu.
3. Copy or move files and folders.

Manipulating Windows

You must know where to locate physical files and folders before they can be manipulated.

1. You can add and remove programs, files, and folders to the Start menu and/or program folders.
2. You may also add or delete items from pop-up menus.

Managing Disks with Explorer

You can use Windows Explorer or My Computer to do tasks.

1. Search for files.
2. View files/folders details.
3. Manipulate folders.
4. Perform operating system functions.
   - ❑ Copying floppy disks
   - ❑ Preparing a disk for use

File related tasks done more frequently.
Need to know how to perform disk-related tasks.

Copying Floppy Disks

Most work is done with the hard disk.
Floppy disks and disk drives:

1. Make exact duplicate of floppy disk.
2. Originally used for installing programs.
3. Make back up copies.
4. Make bootable floppy.

5. Save work.
6. Save digital camera pictures.

Can copy floppy disks, but not hard disks or removable cartridges.
Can copy files from hard disk to floppy – not the same as copying actual disk.
Disk media must be identical when copying from one floppy to another; i.e. 3 ½" high density disk to another 3 ½" high-density disk.
Can copy files from one disk media to another, but files must be copied individually.