

# GET THE MOST OUT OF FILE EXPLORER

You probably use Windows 10's File Explorer (aka Windows Explorer) many times a day as you access folders and files on your hard drive. In fact, File Explorer is the complete organized catalogue of everything that comprises your entire computer system.

You can work more efficiently and confidently by knowing File Explorer's little-known tricks that makes it even more powerful and convenient. You can control what folder the program opens to by default. You can hide and unhide the "ribbon". You can make your favorite File Explorer tools more readily available. And you can use keyboard shortcuts to make everything easier.

## The Many Ways to Open File Explorer

You know how to access File Explorer. But do you know the fastest and simplest way to do it? Or how to control what folder it opens to?

## The Fastest Way to Open File Explorer

The fastest and easiest way to open File Explorer doesn't involve your mouse or touchscreen. Simply press **Win+E** and a File Explorer window will appear. If you're already running File Explorer, it opens an additional File Explorer window.

## Two Options for Viewing Your Computer's Folders and Files: Quick Access and This PC

File Explorer will open to a default location. You can change that default, but there are only two options: *Quick access* and *This PC*.

To change the default location, open File Explorer and click the **File** tab in the upper left corner of the window. Select *Change folder and search options*. In the *General* tab, pull down the "Open File Explorer to" menu and select one of the two options.

The *Quick access* option displays folders and files you may wish to use frequently based on past usage. The *This PC* displays the main library folders and drives.

## Open File Explorer to Any Specific Folder(s)

Fortunately, you can create a **shortcut** to open File Explorer to any specific folder. All you need to do is right-click on your targeted folder and then click on *pin to Quick access*.

When you want to open File Explorer to your desired folder, right-click the File Explorer icon on the taskbar and select the target folder.

## Add the File Explorer Icon to Your Taskbar

What if the File Explorer icon is not on your Taskbar? Simply follow this strand: Right-click on the Desktop>>click on Personalize>>click on Theme>>click on *desktop icon settings*>>click the Computer checkbox>>OK.

At some later date, you may want to remove the shortcut to a folder from that pop-up menu. To do that, right-click the File Explorer icon on Windows' taskbar, point to the folder on the pop-up menu, and click the thumbtack icon next to it.

## The Ribbon and the Toolbar

Somewhere along the line, Microsoft decided that File Explorer should look like a part of Office. Instead of menus, it has ribbons. Ribbons are better than menus on a touchscreen, but they take up a lot of screen real estate.

To hide the ribbon and regain that real estate, click the tiny chevron in the upper-right corner of the file explorer windows, directly below the X that closes the window. The chevron acts as a toggle switch, either opening or closing the ribbon.

Or you can use the keyboard. Press **Ctrl-F1**. To bring back the ribbon permanently, click the chevron or press **Ctrl-F1** again.

You can still access the ribbon while it's hiding. Click on any of the ribbon names (*File, Home, Share, or View*), and that ribbon will temporarily appear.

## Search Tools

Searching in Windows 10 can seem pretty obvious. You type your criteria in the Search field near the upper right side of the File Explorer window. Type in a word and files containing that word pop up.

## Managing Your Folder and File System

In your Windows operating system, just like in the real world, a folder is an object that can contain multiple data files. Folders are used to organize information.

A file is a collection of information that has a name, called the filename. Almost all information stored in a computer is contained inside thousands of individual files. There are many different types of files, i.e., data files (documents, music, videos, and pictures) and program files (word processors, spreadsheet applications, games.) Different types of files store different types of information. For example, program files store applications such as Microsoft Office, whereas data files store data such as documents, music, videos and photographs.

No matter what our previous life experiences have been, whether we were an executive in a large corporation, a manager in a small business, or a homemaker in charge of organizing things around the home, we have all experienced the use of folders and their contents (files).

A metaphor for your computer's file system might be the double drawer of your desk at home in which you have placed a series of hanging folders. Inside several of these hanging folders you may have placed subfolders (sometimes called "nested" folders). Finally, within each of the nested or subfolders you may have placed or "filed" certain important papers or documents. For example, you may have a main folder that you have named **Insurance**. Within the Insurance folder, perhaps you have placed subfolders such as **Life, Medicare, Auto, and Homeowners**. Finally, within each of these folders you have placed the actual documents or policies that relate to each of these areas.

In the final analysis, folders are nothing more than organizers. If a desk drawer file folder named **Auto Insurance** does not contain a policy, the folder itself is useless as a stand alone object. By the same token, if a computer folder is empty, it is valueless.

### **Add a New Folder to Your Computer Using File Explorer**

Virtually all Windows tasks involve working with files and folders. Windows uses folders to provide a storage system for the tens of thousands of files on your computer, just as you use manila folders to organize information in a filing cabinet.

Just as your physical file cabinet can contain many different folders and subfolders in order to enhance the management and control of your personal documents and papers, your computer's electronic file cabinet is set up in exactly the same way in order to manage and control the thousands upon thousands of files stored within.

Folders can contain many different types of files, such as documents, music, pictures, videos, and programs. In addition, you can copy and move files from other locations, such as another folder, another computer, or Web pages from the Internet, to folders you create.

You can even create folders within folders. For example, if you are creating and storing files in the Documents folder, you can make a new folder within Documents to contain those files. If you decide that you want to move the new

folder to a different location, you can easily move it and its contents by right-clicking on the folder, clicking on CUT, moving to the target folder, right-clicking and clicking on PASTE. (Although it is a more bulky process and more hazardous, you can even drag files from one folder to another.)

## **File Explorer (Aka Windows Explorer) is Your Computer's File System**

File explorer provides a handy tool and a straightforward way to allow you to manage your files and folders within your computer. by taking the time to learn how to use this tool, you'll work smarter, faster, and more efficiently.

### **Keep these general rules in mind when using File explorer**

Open File Explorer by using one of these two methods:

- 1) Windows key + E. (preferred method)
- 2) Double-click on the **This PC** icon if it is on the Desktop

### **File Explorer has two panes**

The pane on the left will list only folders and nested folders and is called the Navigation Pane.

The pane on the right will list the contents of the folder that you have selected from the left pane and is called the Contents pane.

The two panes work independently from each other.

The left pane will always show the folders and nested folders, but never the contents of a folder.

The right pane will show the contents of the folder that you have selected from the left pane.

*When you copy or move files or folders, you will always move items from the right pane to the left pane, exactly the opposite of how we read.*

*If a folder in the left pane has a nested folder contained inside it, there will be a lever immediately to the left of the folder's name. Click on the lever to either open or close the folder.*

### **Creating Nested Folders**

It is easy to create nested folders (folders within a folder). Simply right-click on the main folder, then click on *new>folder*. Now simply give the new folder a name.

Many people use nested folders when they are creating individual photo albums nested within their master photos folder.

**Where are all the application files stored?**

The short answer is there is really no reason for the typical user to know where to look. Removing them or modifying them is usually beyond the scope of his computing knowledge. If an application is defective, the best procedure is to reinstall it from the manufacturer.