

Cut the clutter & dust your Desktop.

The first sign that [virtual] Desktop needs emergency clean-up operation is invoking Windows search facility to trace a file that is urgently needed. While the mildest implication of further procrastinating the clean-up could be keeping the boss waiting for that crucial printout, the harshest implication could be inadvertently taking a wrong version of file (containing old data), getting it printed in 2250 copies and realizing the mistake after tabling of report in the Parliament. Anyway, this simple task is not worth waiting for its wrong implications when following simple work practices can be adopted to avoid this clear and present danger of keeping information digitally:



Organise your files

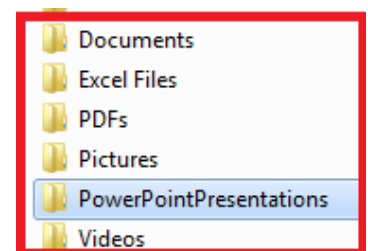


Modern Computers come with vast memory resources to accommodate a lot of things. Considering that one Gigabyte can hold around 16-17 thousand MS-Word documents of average size, the capacity of 500 GB hard disks that come with almost every latest computer virtually allow endless space to put files. A well chalked-out plan for organising the stuff is a must to avoid things getting lost in this vast expanse. Having said this, it is for sure that

one must organise, but 'How to organise?' is still a highly debatable question and its answer largely depend upon the user's perspective of information being stored. Some of the simplest forms of organising computer files and recommended good practices in a workplace scenario are given below:

- **Organising By Category or type of files**

Although, it could not be recommended as the best way to computer file organisation, but, considering the time it can save in retrieving information as compared to unorganised file system, it is still far better than the unorganised space. Besides, this system can be used as mass-organising and "quick fixing" method in an unorganised file system using Windows search facility. This method could mostly be helpful in situations where files are not needed very frequently and where minor details with respect to version, time, context etc do not matter much. For example, keeping compendium of training material made available to participants of a training class, keeping repository of rules, regulations, orders, forms, formats etc.



- **Organise By Date**



Organising by date is helpful in situations where multiple versions of a file are to be kept for reference (e.g. are Report in different styles of formatting) or where previous electronic are required for reference(e.g. monthly progress reports, expenditure control sheets etc.), but still this form of file-organisation is not perfect. Consider folder labelled “21-11-2013” which doesn’t throw a hint about its contents and forces users to open it to look inside. If all files are kept

this way and have all kinds of types intermingled with each other it would become worse than even unorganised file system.

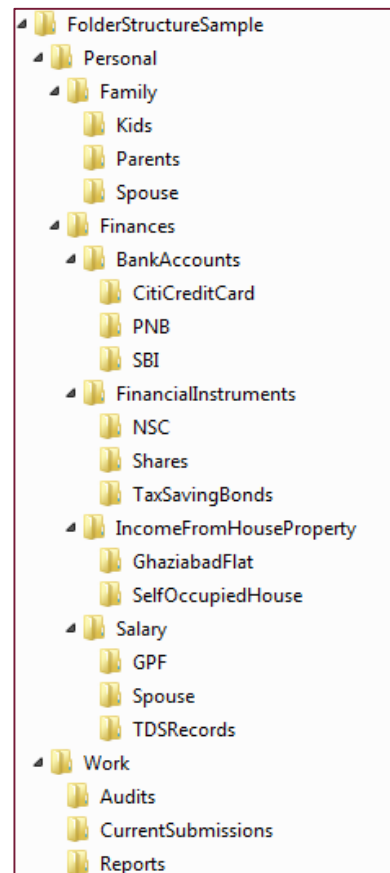
- **Organise in a File system That Mirrors [work] Life**

Another method to organising digital life is to organise it in a manner to mimic real work or personal life and storing and retrieving information naturally. Initially it may appear cumbersome but one gets used to it in a few days and can guide others about ‘what lies where’ in a particular computer even over a phone.

This form of file organisation also gives fair idea of what is crucial and upto what time. For example, current credit card statement or electricity bill may be necessary to make payment but there’s no use keeping a statement or bill downloaded months or even years back. In the absence of proper file organisation, such documents get mingled with other routine documents and lie undetected for years altogether.

A very important point to remember in this regard is that workplace folder should resemble workplace and contain same folder structure that exists in real world file system. Workplace folder should resemble workplace filing system and layout. Moreover, there should be same [IT administration recommended] folder structure for all the employees performing almost similar tasks. Although, it may sound like encroachment of personal [desktop] space and its

utility for a particular employee is highly debatable, it would simplify the process of access of information by superior officers, co-workers and would make task of backup very easy. It would also serve as a good Business Continuity Plan (BCP) tool for disaster recovery in the event of accident with data as a well-defined structure understood by everybody could be easily created using back-up data.

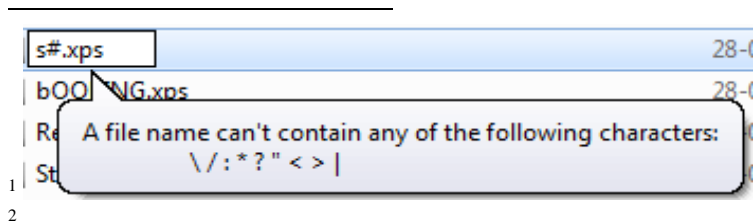
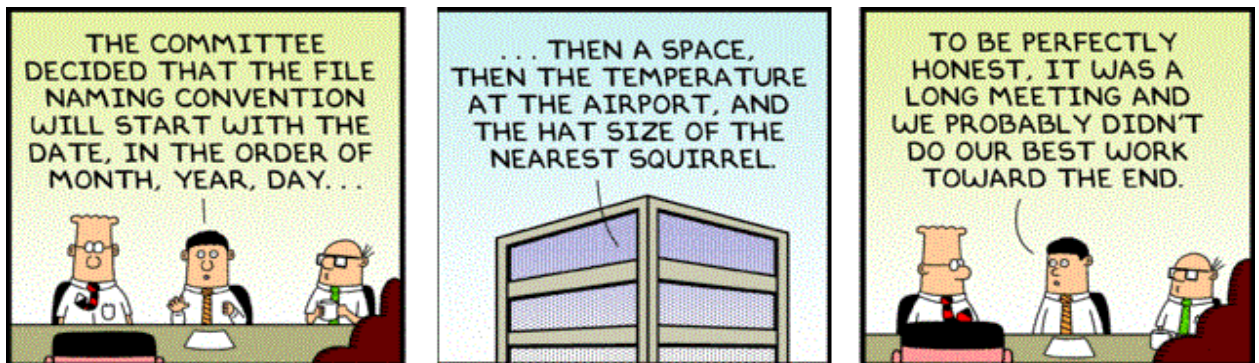


Follow a Naming Convention

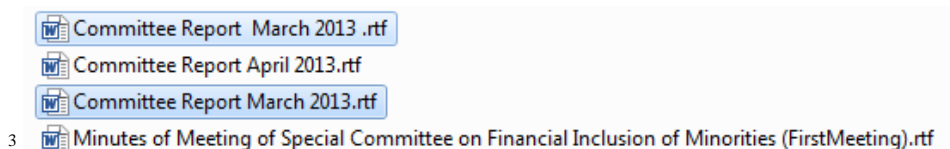
Although, Windows based systems technically allow long file names, permit spaces in between File/Folder names and allow almost all characters to be included as part of name¹, but following facts should be kept in mind while give names to files/folders.

- *Very long file names make it difficult to identify files in different view of same window².*
- *Spaces between filenames entail risk of identical and ambiguous files at same area³.*
- *Use of period/dot in file name entails risk of corrupting windows file associations and make files difficult to open in future.*

So it is not considered a good practice to use very long names, having spaces or dots. One should follow naming conventions like *InitCap* or *Under_score_instead_of_space* and try to keep file names under 27 characters. Uniform naming convention should be [preferably administration recommended] and should be consistently followed throughout the filing system in a section or group.



Actual long File Names	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes of Meeting of Special Committee on Financial Inclusion of Minorities (FirstMeeting).rtf Minutes of Meeting of Special Committee on Financial Inclusion of Minorities (SecondMeeting).rtf Minutes of Meeting of Special Committee on Financial Inclusion of Minorities (SixthMeeting).rtf Minutes of Meeting of Special Committee on Financial Inclusion of Minorities (ThirdMeeting) .rtf 	
Different Views of these long File Names	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes of Meeting of Special Committee on Financial Inclu... Minutes of Meeting of Special Committee on Financial Inclu... Minutes of Meeting of Special Committee on Financial Inclu... Minutes of Meeting of Special Committee on Financial Inclu... 	



Learn to Delete

The internet has made a vast amount of information available at just a few mouse clicks, but one should resist the temptation to archive all of it his/her computer.

Similarly, although newer memory devices offer virtually unlimited space at a relatively low price but one should actively fight the coercion of hoarding all the data that may or may not become necessary in some hypothetical worst case scenarios. One should delete anything that has lost good reason for keeping, and that can be found somewhere else on its need again. If risk of unknown situations that may require all old files is still preventing the hard decision of deleting useless files immediately, then one should consider creating temporary folders with definite life and bury unnecessary files in them. Consider having a temporary folder like *DeleteAfter010114* and move apparently useless files in it. Restore any file that is needed before due date of destruction and mercilessly cull the folder after deadline date with all its contents that have never been used after putting in this folder



Avoid Putting All Your Eggs in a Single Basket



Although **My Documents** is named so and **Desktop** screen has been designed to resemble personal estate, one should avoid keeping everything in it. Remember that due to Windows operating system's in-built security features, it would be next to impossible to reconstruct these two in the event of OS crash. If you really want a lot of things at your desktop, **use Short Cuts**. Short cuts not only provide full functionality of application or file right on the desktop while

keeping the files in relatively safer zones, but these are very good in preventing data theft from your desktop (remember, resolution of file location from shortcut, reaching the location and copying it requires additional time, and skills than using 'Right-Click followed by Send To' sequence.

Beyond Desktop and [My] Documents too, having a single folder for everything entails greater risk of accidental erasure, one-stroke takes it all data theft and difficult access to required information.

If you like Clones, keep them limited and keep them under control

Although hassle free duplicating facility gives power of keeping endless different versions of a file e.g. ten versions of a presentation with different design or slight difference in content, but this feature is responsible for maximum wastage of time while trying to locate that 'Particular One' in the hour of need as user would be compelled to open all the versions to find the 'Right one'. Not only that, poor version management could result in making a wrong presentation or submitting a report with old data. If the situation really requires having different versions of the same information, keep the versions limited, wisely name versions e.g. PRI_Presentation(23rdJune13) or DMRCReport(WithAirportLineData) and immediately delete older, irrelevant versions after completion of task requiring their existence.



Indicative Modal File structure and Nameing Conventions for different sections

