

Tips for better managing your computer

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Table of content

1	Better managing your computer	3
2	Terms To Know	3
3	The windows explorer	3
4	Organisation of your Hard Disk.	4
5	Important tips	5
6	Some ways to make life easier	5
7	Central filing system	5
7.1	Organisation of the filing system	6

1 BETTER MANAGING YOUR COMPUTER

It is no secret that your computer's hard disk is a valuable library of software applications and documents. And the more you use your PC, the bigger your collection becomes. But to prevent your library from becoming a hodgepodge of information, you need to know the secrets of being an efficient hard disk librarian.

File management is one of the more common and repetitive but obliged tasks computer users have to manage in order to keep things running smoothly. After all, it's no use having gigabytes of data on your drives if you can't find anything.

Having a simple but clear plan can make the storage and retrieval of your data much easier, and once implemented can save a lot of time, thought and hassle in the long run. If you can get into a habit of using a specific scheme it soon becomes second nature and takes no thought at all.

2 TERMS TO KNOW

Your **Hard disk** is the permanent storage device for your computer where all your programs and documents are stored; usually its name is **C:**

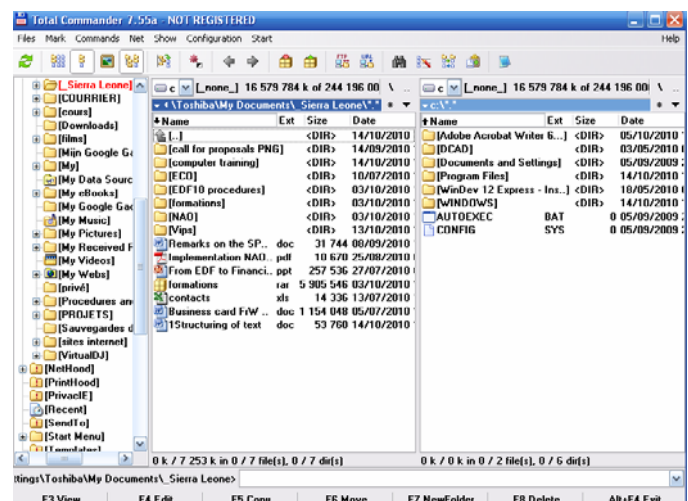
In fact, the first personal computers worked with floppy disks taking the letters **A:** and **B:**. Now many additional storage devices can be attached to the computer (flash disks, USB drives, CD and DVD drives, external hard disks etc. Generally they receive the next available letter as name as soon as they are recognised by the computer.

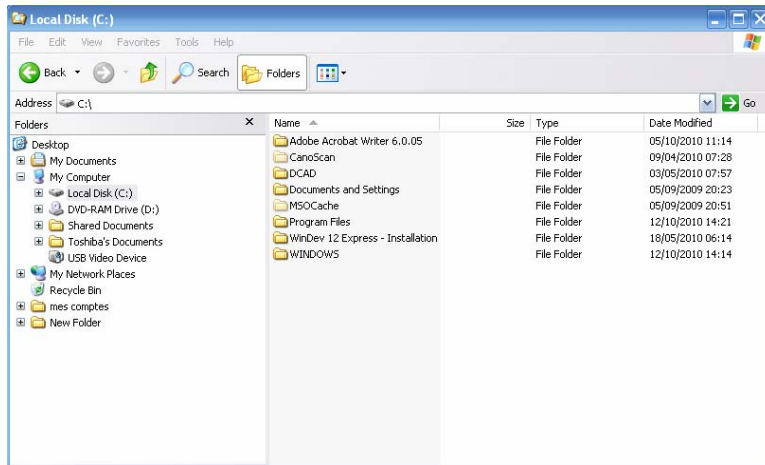
On your hard disk, a **file** is a collection of information stored as a unit and headed by a single name. A document, for example, is a file. A **file name** consists of two or more parts: a **filename**, and one or more optional **extensions**. If you use the extensions, you must separate the filename and extension with a dot. Normally, the last extension refers to the programme which will make your file readable. E.g. for MS-Word the extension is mostly doc, for Excel, "xls. The extension "exe" is used for software not needing another programme to open.

Directories are like electronic file folders; they can hold documents and programs, as well as other directories. The first folder is the root directory: c:\. It might also be understood that there is a root at the level of each folder.

3 THE WINDOWS EXPLORER

Windows includes a very useful tool called "Window explorer" allowing a good visualisation of the content of your computer (and of the drives). Other hard disk mapper (explorer) exist with particular advantages like "total commander" (for-free software). Total commander is faster but seems more complicated. In fact more indicated for (very) advanced users and people who were used to work with DOS operating system.





Window explorer offers many viewing possibilities, but for efficiency purpose, but in reality, the most efficient presentation is having the folders on the left side and the details of folders on the right side. The initial set-up of the programme should slightly be modified to take maximal profit for

advanced users.

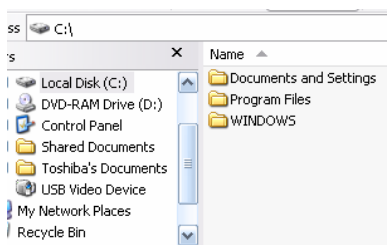
- open the explorer*
- click the folders icon*
- menu view --> details*
- menu tools--> folder options*
- click apply to all folders*
- scroll to files and folders*
- unlick "Hide extensions for known file types"*

4 ORGANISATION OF YOUR HARD DISK.

Most computers work mainly with one hard-disk.

In the past, in fact before XP, all the files and folders of the computer where easily accessible. By default, the computer opened on "c:\\" and mostly, none of the files or folders where hidden. This lead often to very bad hard disk management, files where dropped anywhere on the hard disk sometimes even mixing software files and documents.

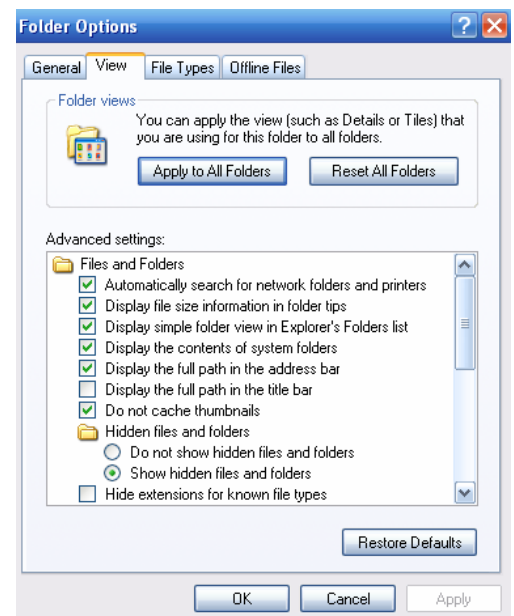
Since Windows XP, the hard disk is by default better organised and certain folders and files are hidden. A normal hard-disk should only have three folders appearing on the explorer like in the image left.



- Programme files contains all the files of the softwares present in the computer
- The folder "Documents and Settings" contains the set-up data of the different programmes specific for the different users of the programme.

- "Windows" hosts the operating system.

As they are generally only operated by one person, most computers will only have two Directories in the "Documents and Settings" folder: His own directory and the "All Users Directory" When backing up the content of the hard disk, these directories should completely be included.



5 IMPORTANT TIPS

Everybody should organise his computer, mainly his hard disk how it suits the best for him. Nevertheless, some general ideas and experiences are good to consider.

- In a personal computer, the Directory “My Documents” should be the only one where data and documents are saved.
- Do not place data files in program folders
- Do not place programs in data folders, never touch, rename or interfere directly in the program directories and files.
- The data should be organised in directories and sub-directories build in a similar way your work (life on private computers) is organised (importance of analysing how you work and how your environment works).
 - classifying per software is in-efficient and no advantages
 - Naming with creation date included is working with duplicates in information (ineffective) it is better to work with Version 1 (V1), V2 etc
 - From a certain point in keeping multiple versions becomes irrelevant
- There should be no duplicates, synonyms similarities or equivalent on in the data or Directories (we don’t speak about back-up or integral copies)
- Many small directories with few files is better than a large subdirectory with many files.
- Directory and file names should be short but descriptive enough i) to understand rapidly what it is about and ii) to facilitate classification and searching
- Build the naming conventions for files and directories in a way to facilitate searching.
- Regularly make back-ups (preferably integral copies) from your data, the best is to back up documents and settings completely.
- Make a folder with the copies of the originals of your softwares and install from there.

6 SOME WAYS TO MAKE LIFE EASIER

Since Widows XP utilities are available on your computer to make the struggle for life with a computer a little bit easier of which

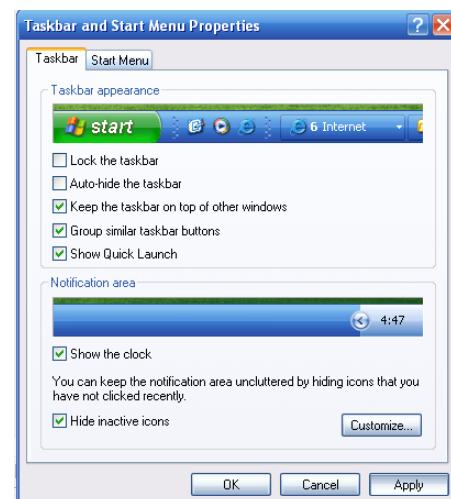
- the use of the taskbar
- the use of the quick launch toolbar

These functions can be activated and deactivated in the pop up window appearing when right-clicking near the “start” button and clicking properties.

7 CENTRAL FILING SYSTEM

In the next weeks a central filing system will be implemented and made accessible to all off us. We will already have now a first view of how the filing system will be organized. This can give ideas for enhancing our own systems.

A computer will be made central server. In fact it is like the hard disk of the office. The intention is to centralize all the mail and documentation of the NAO office on this computer. Back-ups will be made on regular intervals. The important is that it should



be structured in such a way that everybody can easily find his way and that wrong filing is avoided as much as possible.

7.1 ORGANISATION OF THE FILING SYSTEM

In the NAO-Office, all the work is regulated on the basis of existence of existing or future commitments.

There are 4 commitment levels for the NAO system:

- EDF
- Financing agreement (Decision for EC-Del)
- Primary commitment (or specific commitment) (Project for EC-Del)
- Secondary commitment (contracts within primary commitment like PEs and grants), (is not specifically accounted for t EC-Del level)

Within each of the commitments and commitment levels, the documentation and mails can be ordered in the following groups:

- (General) mail
- Reports
- Finance
- Contracts

The whole documentation organization functions with numbers and in parallel with names. The numbers are given on a sequential manner after signature of the commitment (the not yet signed commitments receive provisory negative numbers)

