



File Management

What is File Management?

File management describes the techniques used to name, store and handle files / folders on your computer, pendrive, external hard drive or Cloud Storage space.

- Saving all of your files, pictures, videos, etc. into a folder called My Documents **is NOT File Management.**
- Saving everything to your Desktop **is NOT File Management.**
- Letting Word, PowerPoint, etc. autosave your work **is NOT File Management.**
- Letting Word, PowerPoint, etc. autoname your work **is NOT File Management.**
- Having the only copy of your assignment draft stored on a pendrive **is NOT File Management.**

How we name files and folders, how we arrange these nested folders, and how we handle the files in these folders are the fundamental aspects of file management.

File Management Top Tips

"Thought file management was just for paper files? Think again. It's just as important to keep the files on your computer and/or mobile devices organized and up-to-date. Just as with paper files, the goal of computer file management is to ensure that you can find what you're looking for, even if you're looking for it years after its creation." (from About.com)

1. File Naming - Employ good file naming conventions. It will help ensure that you can locate anything/everything when you need it and you should know what each file is without having to open it first.

If your document is about the data gathered from observing starfish migration patterns in April; then name the document as "Starfish-migration-data-april".

2. Folder Naming - Employ good folder naming conventions. It is important that you know where to file your documents and how to find them later.

If a folder contains your written drafts then name it as "Thesis drafts".

3. Create a folder structure - Put folders within folders to build up your filing structure. It will help make sense of your documents and their relationship to other documents. An example would be:

- **Module Folder**
 - Assignment Folder
 - Drafts Folder
 - Notes Folder
 - References Folder

4. Get friendly with Windows Explorer - Windows Explorer is the program that most people use to view and organise files/folders on a Windows computer. It is the window that opens when you view My Computer or the Documents Library.

Getting familiar with Windows Explorer (or an equivalent program) will allow you to proficiently locate and manage your files and folders.

5. File as you go - Don't rely on coming back later to file something properly. Spend an extra 30 seconds now and potentially save hours later when you can't find it.

6. Manage Your Files Everywhere - File management is not just about the files and documents on your computer - use the same strategies and conventions for all of your storage (CD, pendrive, cloud, etc.).

7. Use Backup Strategies - Even with the perfect filing system; there is nothing to stop your computer from breaking. Keep your important files safe. See Backup Strategies Top Tips for more information.

8. Clean up after yourself - Put away your finished work. When a module, document, photo is finished with or you don't expect to need it for a while - file it away somewhere safe. Consider filing it in the Cloud.

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Further help and guidance is available from Skills@cumbria.

Skills@cumbria can be accessed through the University of Cumbria website or via the Skills@cumbria tab in Blackboard. These self-directed eLearning resources cover many areas of study skills and personal academic development.

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