



ORGANIZING YOUR COMPUTER

Think of your computer as a virtual filing cabinet and you'll have a useful image to guide your work in getting and staying digitally organized. The fact that the files and folders are all data and not paper is the only distinction of note – otherwise, a file is a file is a file, to paraphrase Gertrude Stein.

You may not have a physical filing cabinet, you may not own a single folder, and you may be surrounded by stacks of papers in an order recognizable only to you. That's fine. When we are finished with this chapter, your computer's organizational structure will become the blueprint for any future filing you'll do of actual paper.

First, go to where your computer is. Make sure it's on and that you're at your desktop. You should already have a folder called either documents on your hard drive. Find it now, please. If you don't, for some reason, create a new folder now and name it documents.

This will now become your root, or base, folder for all your documents and personal files. By personal files, I mean all data or documents that you have the ability to download, create, or modify on your computer. Remember, we're not altering stand-alone software applications or programs, and unless you are also a computer programmer, you should probably never be inside an application's folder altering or moving or deleting any files. Files with seemingly innocuous names could be pivotal pieces of code that will irreparably impair an application's ability to run on your computer. When it comes to application folders, remember this adage: when in doubt, stay out.

Unlike a real file cabinet, additional drawers take up a fraction of space they would if they were in 3-D, so there's no limit to the number of drawers you may have in your file cabinet. The rule in creating them is that you should make their names specific enough to be recognized by someone other than you but not so specific that they would contain only one thing. That would be a better choice for a folder within the drawer, rather than the drawer itself.

As an example, here are some folders on my computer that represent my file drawers.

DOCUMENTS

- QUICKEN AND QUICKBOOK FILES
- ANDREW MELLEN, INC.
- FINANCES
- MEDICAL AND HEALTH
- CURRENT WRITING
- OFFICE SUPPLIES
- CORRESPONDENCE, PERSONAL
- CORRESPONDENCE, PROFESSIONAL
- GARDENING
- GRAD SCHOOL
- OWNER'S MANUALS
- PHOTOS
- TRAVEL

Many of these folders contain subfolders that further separate the contents into more specific groupings. Consider these folders within the specific drawers.

DOCUMENTS

- ANDREW MELLEN, INC.
 - AMI ARTWORK
 - AMI BIOS, RESUME, AND HEAD SHOTS

AMI CONTRACTS
AMI GIFT CERTIFICATES
AMI PUBLIC RELATIONS
AMI WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS
CLIENT FILES

If we drill down one more level, this is how that looks.

DOCUMENTS

ANDREW MELLEN, INC.

CLIENTS FILES

BECCA and CAROL

PATTI and NINA

IRIS

CASUAL CLIENTS

INACTIVE CLIENTS

And one more level looks like this.

DOCUMENTS

ANDREW MELLEN, INC.

CLIENTS FILES

BECCA and CAROL

PATTI and NINA

IRIS

CASUAL CLIENTS

INACTIVE CLIENTS

AMANDA S.

MARK A.

RICHARD M.

Now start to list the names of drawers (or folders) you would have in your file cabinet in your Documents folder.

DOCUMENTS
