

File Types and Organization

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Windows uses a standardized structure for organizing files. This handout focuses on the Windows Vista, 7 and 8 Operating Systems. If you have Linux, Mac or Windows XP your file system has a different order of folders.

Files are organized into folders, and folders are arranged into a particular filing system. That filing system is referred to as the Windows File Tree.

“Explorer Window” refers to a window that shows you the contents of a drive. Illustration 1 shows an example of an Explorer Window.

In this handout, pathways through Windows folders are described using a *File Tree Notation* which looks like this:

Start > Computer > Libraries > MyPictures

When logged into your Windows Vista or Windows 7 user account, the critical path to remember is (repeated -almost exactly- from just above):

Start > Computer > C: > Libraries > My...

- “Start” is the Windows Start button, which is indicated either by the word “Start”, or by the Windows Start icon.
- If you have a Windows 8 machine, then you begin by opening your desktop then clicking on the folder icon in your taskbar (the taskbar is located at the bottom of your screen)

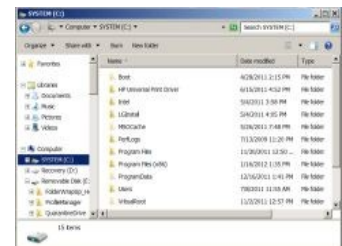


Illustration 1: An Explorer Window

- *Computer* is the Computer link in your Start Menu
- *C:* refers to your hard drive
- *Libraries* refers to the user folders for the account you're currently logged into.
- *My...* is shorthand for all of your *MyStuff* folders such as MyPictures, MyDocuments, MyDownloads, MyMusic, etc.



Saving Pictures

To save an item, right-click on it with your mouse-button. This opens a drop-down menu that includes the “Save As” option. In the example shown here the item is a picture so Windows inserts the word “picture” into the *Save As* menu.

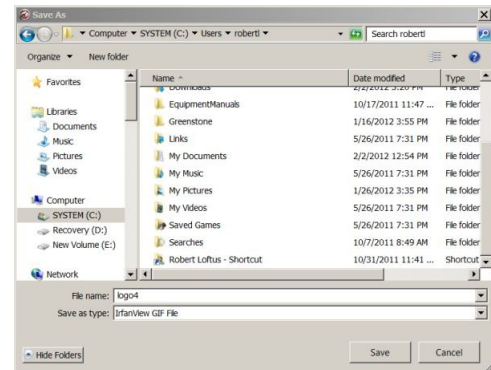
Your web browser will usually save pictures in one of two locations: the *MyDownloads* folder, or the *MyPictures* folder. Web browsers

vary. Google Chrome and Comodo Dragon save everything in your Downloads folder, while Internet Explorer and Firefox put pictures files in your Pictures folder, audio files in the MyMusic folder, etc.

To look for a picture you've downloaded repeat the path mentioned above: Start > Computer (Or click on your folder icon in Windows 8) > Libraries > and look into the MyPictures and MyDownloads folder. If you look in a folder but the item isn't where you expect it to be just remain calm, back out of that folder and check through the other folders.

You can also change which folder your web browser saves an object in. In the top bar of the Explorer window that appears after you **right-click** > **Save ...** As there is a file-path indicator that tells you which folder the item you're saving will be placed in. To select a different folder just click on one of the folders in the **Libraries** column to the left of your screen.

After you've tried downloading files, practice looking for them, using the file path described on the first page of this handout.



File Types

File types are identified by the *file extension*, which is the 3 to 4 letter code which follows the period in a file name. For example, if you download a picture with the filename "RentalCottage01.jpeg", it means that the file name is "RentalCottage01", and the file type is a jpeg file. Through practice and memorization you'll eventually remember that "jpeg" means a picture file, and that anytime you see a file with the ".jpeg" file extension, that it is a picture file.

If you aren't sure what kind of file you're dealing with, you can go to duckduckgo.com and type the file extension into the search-bar, and at the top of your list of results you'll be given a definition of what type of file you have.