

# acclaim

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CANADIAN ASSOCIATION  
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## YOUR VOICE

### KEEPING YOUR COMPUTER ORGANIZED

by Joy Neuhold

There's a reason why the terminology for computers (files and folders) is the same as for your office. If you like to keep your office files sorted and filed away properly you'll likely have done the same with your computer files. On the other hand, if you use the top of your dining room table, filled with papers in no particular order, as your filing system, you've likely done the same with your computer; files and folders strewn randomly across your Desktop and My Documents folder. Where do you start?



#### Categorizing

*Think from the top down* – What are the primary things in my life I use my computer for? Work? Household? Photos? Hobbies? Games? Think of broad categories like these and make them folders in your My Documents folder.

*Now think from the bottom up* – Take all your individual files that are sitting on your Desktop or My Documents folder and ask yourself, are any of these similar in some way? If so, create a folder and put all those files inside. Then put this folder inside one of your broad category folders. Do you have a bunch of letters to family sitting on your desktop? Create a folder called Family Letters and put them all inside. Now think about what broad category the Family Letters folder belongs in and put them there. Everything in your life should be able to fit into the broad categories, so don't leave any individual files sitting on your desktop or the root of your My Documents folder.

#### Long Term Storage

You don't want to delete the spreadsheet you used to add up your tax receipts 3 years ago, but you don't exactly need to access it on a regular basis. The more files and folders you have lying around the more confusing it is, even when it's well organized. So create a broad category called Historical, or something similar, and put all your folders containing files you don't use often in there. Zipping those folders will save hard drive space.

#### Managing Shortcuts

Every program and its brother wants to put a shortcut on your Desktop AND Start Menu. Go through all these and determine which ones you don't use on a regular basis. Removing these from your desktop will make things much less cluttered.

#### Use your Desktop as a... Desktop

Have different types of shortcuts on your desktop (some to games, others to programs for work, etc)? Who arranges everything on their real desks in order of creation from the top down? Why not right click on the desktop and turn off the Auto-Arrange feature? Now you can drag shortcuts around your screen and they'll stay where you drop them. Maybe put all your game shortcuts in the top right and all the Microsoft Office programs in the bottom left, and so forth.

#### In The Future

*Name stuff* – Don't call new files "temp" or "Document 1" - give them descriptive names so you'll know at a glance what they are. Make sure you save them in your new folders.

*Clean out your Recycle Bin regularly* – Stuff in there is just taking up space. Empty it on a regular basis or just skip that step and press Shift+Del whenever you delete something to bypass the Recycle Bin and permanently delete things (make sure you really want to delete it).

An organized computer saves you time when working and gives you easy access to the files

you need to be successful.

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