

Wrestling with Computers: The Fast and Easy Way to Organize Your Desktop

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You can save time and reduce frustration by organizing your computer's "desktop". Think of your computer as your virtual desk and file cabinet. For certain items you want to get at quickly you can leave them out on your desktop. For other items, you can file them away, but still get at them quickly.

With a few simple clicks and a little guidance, you can have your computer organized in no time. Then you'll be able to find things quickly – from photos to emails to files.

Let's start by personalizing your desktop. Your desktop is the page that automatically appears when you first log on. Your computer comes with a number of preinstalled backgrounds available or you can use one of your own photos.

It's easy to set up a preinstalled background on your computer. Right click (use the right button on your mouse) on an unused part of your desktop. You'll see a menu screen pop up. Make sure you don't click on an icon as this will open up that file instead.

Next, scroll to "**properties**" and click on "**desktop**". Click on one of the available background options. Click "**apply**". This will automatically change your background to the background you have selected.

If you'd like to use one of your own personal photos as a background, then follow the instructions above. But instead of clicking on one of the preinstalled backgrounds click on "**Browse**" this will bring up a list of the folders on your computer. Locate your photo then click "**apply**".

Now let's create a filing system that is easy to use and understand—and one you can quickly find items in just a click or two of your mouse. A folder is a "container" -- just like the folders in a filing cabinet that holds pieces of paper. Examples of items you would put into files are: Word documents, Excel sheets, photos and PowerPoint Presentations. Here are a few tips to naming and organizing your files:

1. Name folders something memorable that will differentiate them from your other folders. Don't have a folder just called "photos" or even "summer photos", instead call it "summer08kidsphotos".
2. Create subfolders. If you have lots of "summer08kidsphotos, then add a subfolder to that folder that says "Fourth of July" or "Trip to Loon Lake".
3. If you can't decide where a new item should go, then make a new folder. Obviously you don't want to make a folder for everything, but you should create a filing system that

works for you. Your goal is to find what you need when you need it, not spend hours searching for it.

4. Create folders on your desktop for items you use regularly. This will help you get to it quickly. To create a new folder on the desktop, right click on the **desktop** (not on an Icon). Click “**New**”, then click on “**Folder**”. Name the folder. Now you’re ready to put items into it. Simply drag and drop or copy/cut and paste files or folders to move them.
5. Create shortcuts. For folders or programs that are not on your desktop, but you still use a lot, you can create a shortcut to it on your desktop. To do this, you would go to the folder or program, for example Microsoft Word. Right click on it. A menu pops up. You would scroll to and click “**Send to**”. Finally click “**Desktop (create shortcut)**”. An icon for this program or folder will automatically appear on your desktop. Now when you want to get to that file or program you just click twice on the icon.

Finally make sure you take out the trash. Just like your trash at home, it needs to be emptied once in a while. If you put something in the trash it should be trash. Don’t use it as a “miscellaneous” folder.

Empty the bin every day. Just right click on the Recycle bin icon on your desktop. A menu will pop up. Scroll to “**Empty Recycle bin**”. If you want to avoid the Trash bin entirely when you delete something, simply hold down the shift key and click “**Delete**”. But be careful. You will lose the data forever.

By spending just a few minutes following these organizational tips, you can enjoy an uncluttered desktop with everything you need right at your fingertips.

If you have any questions or need computer help, or would like to know more about maintaining or organizing your computer ,please contact me at Brewster PC Solutions. My number is 508-746-6423, or email me at wbrewster@brewsterpcsolutions.com

