

Using Windows Explorer in Windows XP

Windows Explorer offers you a fast, easy way to search, view, copy, delete, move, etc., the folders and files found on all of your disk drives. Think of it as one really big filing cabinet. It is important to note that the Windows Explorer application is different from Internet Explorer. Windows Explorer lets you play with the files on your computer, while Internet Explorer allows you to connect to other computers via the World Wide Web.

How to open Windows Explorer

For Windows XP:

1. Click the Windows **Start** button, and then select the **Programs** button.
2. Select the **Accessories** button.
3. Click on **Windows Explorer**.

What are Drives, Folders and Files?

For organizational purposes, everything on your computer is reduced or segmented into very specific parts and locations. Your PC also consists of drives which are further broken down into Hard Drive(s), CD-ROM drives, floppy drives, ZIP drives (if applicable) and so forth. Within each Drive, there are hundreds, and potentially thousands of Folders and Files. Again, each of these files and folders are of great assistance in keeping things orderly.

A Folder is very similar to a folder in a file cabinet. Inside each of the Folders, there may very well be more sub-folders, or Files. Folders are a great way to keep you organized on different projects that you may be involved with. For example, you might have a Folder for all of your documents, and another for all of your spreadsheets. Furthermore, you may have sub-folders within these to keep those documents even more organized.

Each individual document and spreadsheet within is known as a File. Files are the items that you are able to view and to work on if desired. An example would be the images you download from your digital camera; or the Word document that you've created.

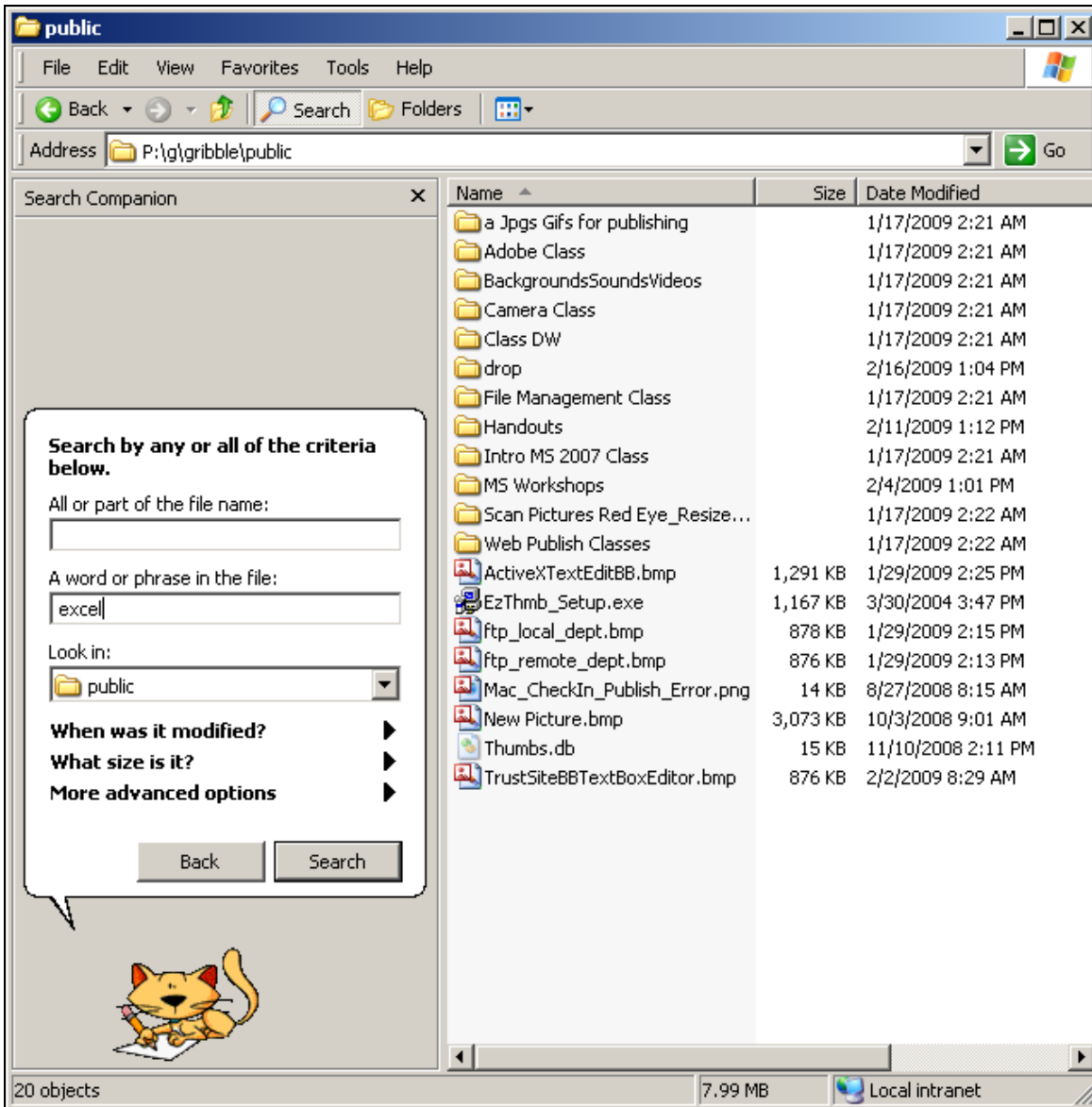
What's inside all these folders?

When you open Windows Explorer, you will see two sections, a left pane and right pane. The left pane shows you your drives and folders. This layout is called a tree, as it closely resembles a tree with all of the branches. To the left of each of the drives is a small [+] symbol. Using the mouse and clicking on this symbol will show you all the folders that are stored on that particular drive. Some of these folders themselves will also have a [+] symbol next to them. Again, this means that there are more sub-folders contained within that particular folder. If you click on the [+], it will open the folder list to reveal the contents and change the [+] to a minus [-] symbol. This simply means that the folder has been opened accordingly. If you click the [-] then it will close the folder and return it to the [+] symbol.

The right pane shows all the files and sub-folders that are contained within the folder that you are currently viewing with Explorer. For example, let's view the contents of the **My Documents** folder. Generally speaking, this folder is contained on the C: drive of your PC. As such, locate your C: drive in the left pane, click the [+] next to this drive- remember, if it's already opened, it will have a [-] next to it. From the folders listed in the C: drive, locate the **My Documents** folder. Click on the Folder itself, not the [+] symbol next to it. This will change the contents of the right pane to display all of the sub-folders and files in **My Documents**.

Searching for a File on the Network

First navigate to the folder that you think your file is in. This should be as close as possible to the location. The more folders it must search in would take more time. Click on the Search icon on the tool bar and type in All or part of the file name or A word or phrase in the file.



Opening a file

It is important to note that your computer contains two vastly different types of files. There are Program files and Data files. Program files are the applications that you run on your computer. Data files, on the other hand, contain information that was created by the Program files. These might include text documents, photos or images and music. To open a Program file, simply point the mouse cursor on the file, and click twice - double-click- with the left mouse button.



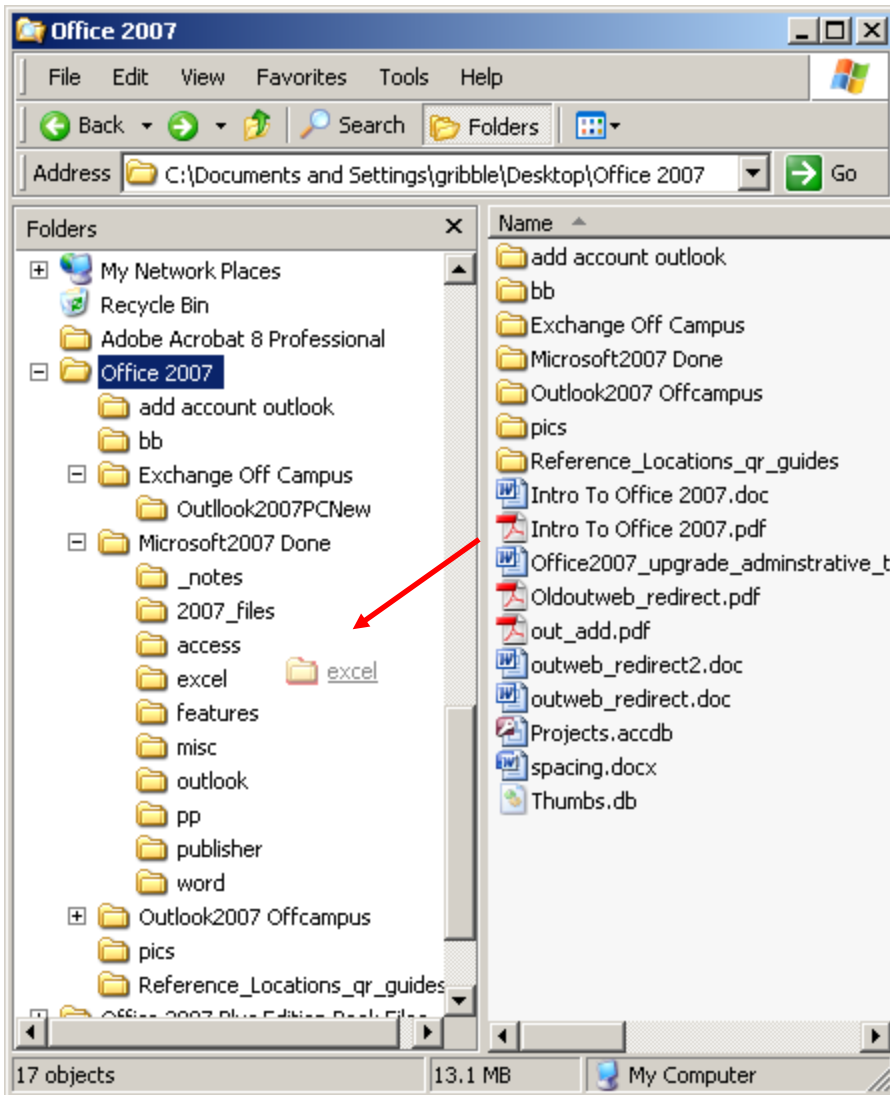
Move or Copy a File

The simplest and most efficient way to move or copy a file is to use your mouse to drag it to the desired location. Moving a file is defined as taking the file out of one folder and placing it into a different folder. Copying on the other hand, keeps the original file in its current or existing folder, and makes an additional copy in the new or target folder.

To move a file:

Locate the file you wish to move on the right pane.

Scroll the left pane so that the target folder or desired location appears. In other words, you are able to see the folder in which you wish to move the file. Click and hold down the left mouse button on the file you wish to move. With the mouse button still held down, move the mouse cursor to the target folder. While you are doing so, a faint image of the icon should now appear with the mouse cursor. See red arrow below. When the target folder is highlighted, release the mouse button. This will move the file from its current location to the new desired location. Holding down the mouse button while moving the cursor is called dragging the mouse.



The file you moved should now appear in the new folder.

To copy a file, follow the same steps as above for moving a file, but this time, hold down the Ctrl key on the keyboard while you are dragging the file.

The same steps can also be used for copying and moving folders themselves. When you copy or move a folder, everything in the folder, including files and sub-folders, are also transferred as well.

Creating a new Folder

On the Menu bar, click File, then select New and finally click Folder and the folder will be created in the right hand pane. At this point, the new folder will be created and the name will be highlighted. Type in the name you wish to call the new folder. Make sure that prior to making

the new folder that you are located at the proper place in the hierarchical view in the left pane. The new folder will always be created as a subfolder of whatever location you have selected.

