



# Coffee and Computers Newsletter



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## **\*\*WINDOWS FILE STRUCTURE\*\*** **\*\*COMPUTER CLASSES\*\***

It seems every Friday there are questions that require some understanding of the Windows file structure.

### **HISTORY**

Computers store the information they need to operate in groups of ones and zeros called files. Modern computers store this information usually on their hard drives (no more punch cards).

To help the computer use this information, the files are given names. For a long time, this naming convention called for filenames of eight characters or less, followed by a dot and three additional characters called the extension that identify the file type.

### **MECHANICS**

Different computers store this information in different ways. In Bill Gates' world of Windows, these files are grouped in bunches and placed in Folders.

To see where these files and folders are stored, Windows has a program called Windows Explorer (not to be confused with Internet Explorer). This

program depicts graphically the arrangement of files and folders on any of the computer's drives.

Windows lately has tried to make it easier for users by allowing filenames longer than eight characters. Gates calls these "long file names." The computer still stores these files internally as eight character plus extension.

(To see how this magic works, go to Windows Explorer and find any file. Right click on the file name and select Properties in the popup windows. You will see the actual MS-DOS name.)

To tell the computer what to do with any one file, the computer looks at the extension. Most extensions are standardized. Thus Microsoft Word documents use the extension ".doc." Microsoft Excel uses an extension ".xls." Most web pictures are identified by the extensions ".jpg" or ".gif." And so on.

The computer “associates” these extensions with specific programs. When you click on a file that has a “.doc” extension, the computer opens Microsoft Word and displays the document.

To see how this magic works, open Windows Explorer, click on View in the menu bar, then click on Folder Options. A popup window will appear. Click on File Types. The list in the left hand window shows file types. Click on any of the types and the lower part of the popup shows the “file association.” You might notice that Microsoft Word documents open with WINWORD, the word program. You also see the icon that appears next to the filename in Windows Explorer.

You can change these file extensions but shouldn’t unless you are brave.

You might also notice that some types open in NOTEPAD. This occurs sometimes when the computer doesn’t know what to do with a particular file.

#### **CONFUSED YET?**

The Windows File structure actually is simple conceptually but seems to be daunting in practice. I believe this mainly is because of the new language that has to be learned.

#### **IS THERE HELP?**

Yes, fortunately. The Tustin Area Senior Center offers a class called Intermediate Windows. I teach this class at the computer laboratory in the Tustin Family and Youth Center, 14722 Newport Ave, Tustin.

The next class is scheduled to begin on Wednesday, February 6, 2002. The class meets for four sessions from 1 – 3 p.m. The course fee is \$49.

We usually spend the first session on some Windows functions like “cut/copy and paste,” and multi-tasking where more than one program is open at the same time.

The next two sessions are devoted to the concept and mechanics of the Windows File structure. We create folders, move files, copy to diskettes or Zip drives and rename and delete our creations.

Lastly, the Windows environment is explored through the various programs in Control Panel. See how to Add/Remove Programs and master the System information.

This course is for those who wish to move along in their computer education. It’s a little more advanced than the beginning courses but helps in mastering the intricacies of Windows.

If you are interested, sign up at the Tustin Area Senior Center before February 5<sup>th</sup>.

#### **INTERNET AND SCANNING CLASSES**

These classes start again also the first week of February.

Internet I – The Web, explores Connecting to the World Wide Web; Surfing the Web; Searching the Web;

and Buying on-line. This course is aimed primarily for beginners or those who want to brush up their Web skills. The next session begins Monday morning, February 4<sup>th</sup> and is from 9 – 11:30.

Internet II – Email explores composing email messages, Replying, Forwarding and using Attachments. Newsgroups also are introduced. It begins Tuesday morning, February 5<sup>th</sup> and is 9-11:30.

Both courses use Microsoft Internet Explorer and its email program Outlook Express. There is enough similarity in programs that Netscape and AOL users can benefit.

Scanning for Fun is a two session class which introduces the various functions of the scanning process: use of the scanner; manipulation of the scanned image using special programs; how to Save the image in a file format appropriate to its intended use; and using the final image in emails or printed versions.

Scanning for Fun begins Monday afternoon, February 4<sup>th</sup> from 1-3.

All courses are offered through the Senior Center and held at the Family and Youth Center. Sign up at the Senior Center, 200 S. 'C' Street, Tustin.

## **OTHER COURSES**

If you just are starting your computer adventure or if your interest is more along the lines of using applications programs like Word and Excel, the Adult School of the Tustin Unified School District has some very good classes. They are offered in the computer laboratory behind Tustin High School. Louise Records teaches most of the classes and she is wonderful. Call the Adult School at 714.730.7394 for details.

Of course, don't forget to keep attending 'Coffee and Computers' each Friday morning. Bring your questions or just visit.

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