

File Management

Most of your tasks in Windows XP will involve working with information stored on your computer. This material briefly explains how information is stored in Windows XP.

It also introduces you to one of the most useful programs for managing information in Windows—the Windows Explorer. Explorer differs from “All Programs” in the **Start** menu in that it shows you how information is organized on your computer and provides you with the tools to manage it.

Windows XP was designed for *file sharing*. What that means is that each person who logs on to the computer will find his or her own sets of files, folders, fonts, Internet bookmarks, desktop pictures, etc., and that these files cannot be accessed by any other user, except for an Administrator. If your computer logon is for “generic” or “guest,” you will not have sharing privileges with others, unless your instructor has set up a sharing folder.

Files and Folders

The basic unit of storage in Windows is called a *file*. The documents you create and use, as well as the programs you use, are all files. These files are stored in *folders*, which can contain other folders as well as files.

Filenames in Windows may include up to 255 characters, including spaces. A filename also has a three-letter extension, which identifies the type of file. For example, the extension “doc” identifies a file as a Word document. The extension is separated from the filename by a period (often called a “dot”), as in “Birthday.doc” (birthday[dot]doc).



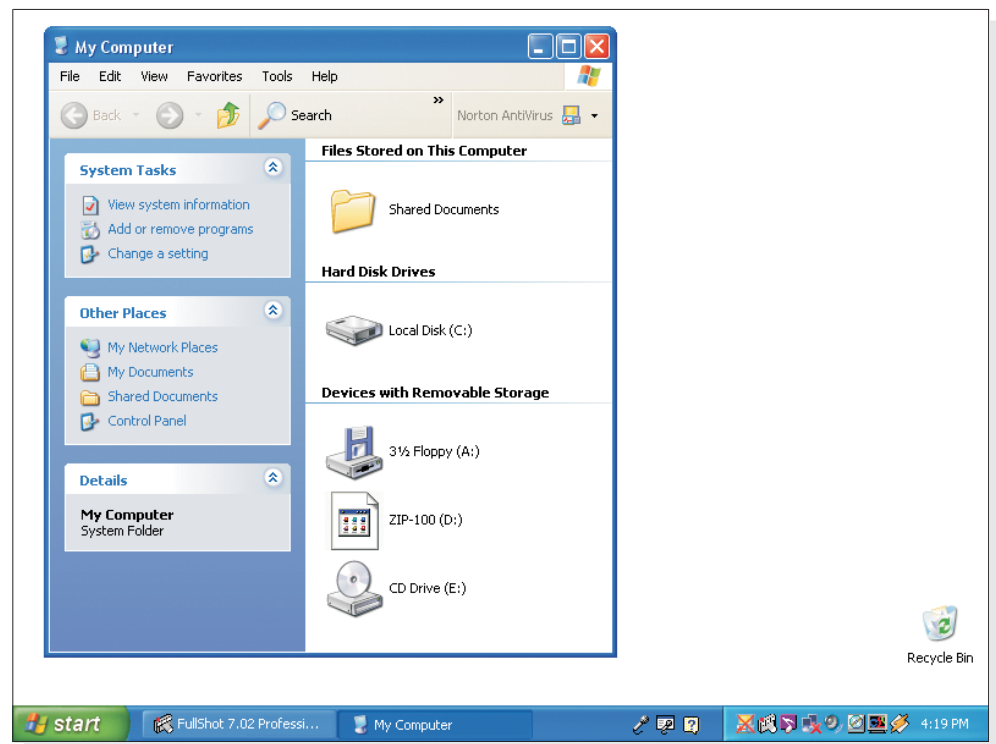
NOTE: By default, file extensions are not displayed. To display them in Windows Explorer, open the **Tools** menu, choose **Folder Options**, display the **View** tab, and then clear the Hide File Extensions For Known File Types check box.

Where the Files Reside

All your files are located on the hard drive Local Disk, Drive “C.” They can be accessed from the **Start** menu in various ways. To see how the hard drive organizes its files:

1. Click **Start**. The **Start** menu appears.
2. Click **My Computer**. The My Computer folder appears. Leave My Computer open.

FIGURE 1
My Computer



On the top level you will see a folder for Shared Documents, and your folder captioned with your logon name (not shown). The shared folder contains files that the people who have sharing right of entry can view. This always includes the Administrator. It can include files placed there by your instructor, and files that you wish to share with others.

On the next level is the icon for the Local Disk—the “C” drive, which contains all of the files local to your computer. It does not contain files that are on the network, which are accessed separately. This level may include more than one drive, if your computer has them.

The third level contains icons for devices with removable storage. These are disk drives to which you can copy files on floppies, Zip disks, and CDs, as well as other removable media drives.

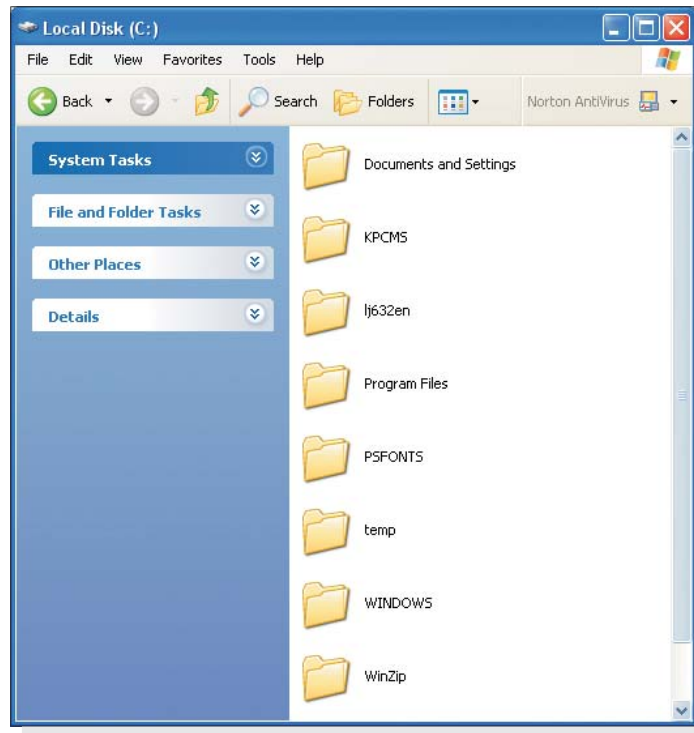
You can also access Control Panel from the Other Places category in My Computer. The Control Panel contains a variety of icons for computer management. You probably won’t be using most of these until you become more familiar with computer management.

The “C” Drive

You generally do not need to open the “C” drive to gain access to your files. However, getting a basic idea of how Windows has stored your information can make file management easier to understand.

1. Click the C-Drive icon. Its contents are displayed. The Local Disk, “C,” contains many files that are used by the computer for managing the system. However, there are some folders that are relevant to you as a logged on user.

FIGURE 2
Local Disk (C:) window



2. Click **Documents and Settings**. The contents are displayed. You will find a folder for each logged-on user, along with one named All Users, and another for the Default User. The Default User contains files that control the computer setup assigned to a generic user or visitor. Each logged-on user's folder contains files that can be accessed only by that specific user. The All Users folder contains shared document files.

Navigating for Files and Folders

The appendix “Windows Tutorial” on the Online Learning Center covers accessing files through the All Programs command on the **Start** menu. The second method for viewing and accessing files and folders is through *Windows Explorer*.

Opening Windows Explorer

One of the most useful tools in Windows XP for managing folders and files on your computer is Windows Explorer. This program displays folders and files in a hierarchical structure, similar to a family tree. It allows you to browse through all your computer's drives and folders in a single window. You can also use it to see the contents of other computers on your network.

There are several ways in which you can open Windows Explorer. One way is as follows:

1. Click the Start button on the taskbar.
2. Choose **All Programs**.
3. From the **All Programs** submenu, choose **Accessories**.
4. From the **Accessories** submenu, choose **Windows Explorer**. The Windows Explorer folder appears.

On some installations, you may not find Windows Explorer located in Accessories. In that case, do this:

1. Click **Start, Run**. The Run dialog box appears.
2. Type **Explorer** in the Open box.
3. Click **OK**. The Windows Explorer folder displays.

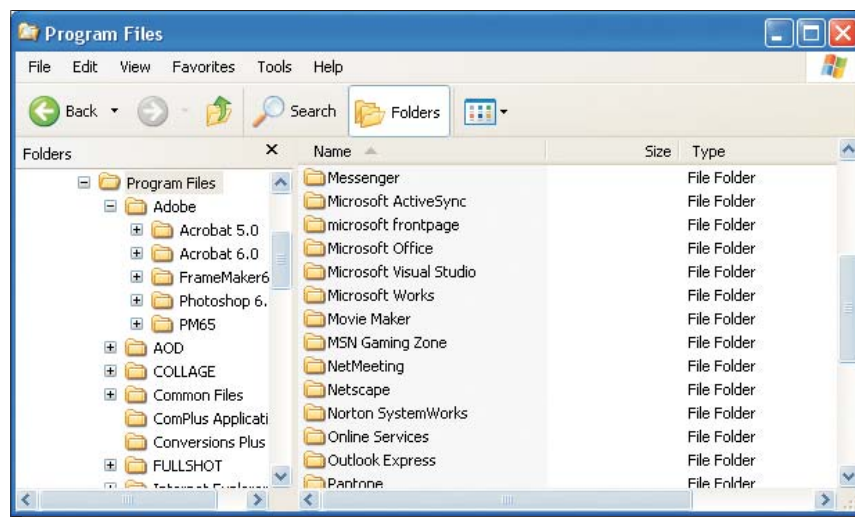
Or you can locate Windows Explorer by double-clicking:

1. Press the **(Shift)** key and double-click any disk or folder.
2. The Windows Explorer folder displays.

Starting Windows Explorer

Windows Explorer is divided into two panes: The left pane shows the network (if any) and the hierarchy of computers, drives, and folders. The right pane shows the contents of the item you click on the left pane. Various icons are used to represent folders, computers, drives, and networks.

FIGURE 3
Windows Explorer window

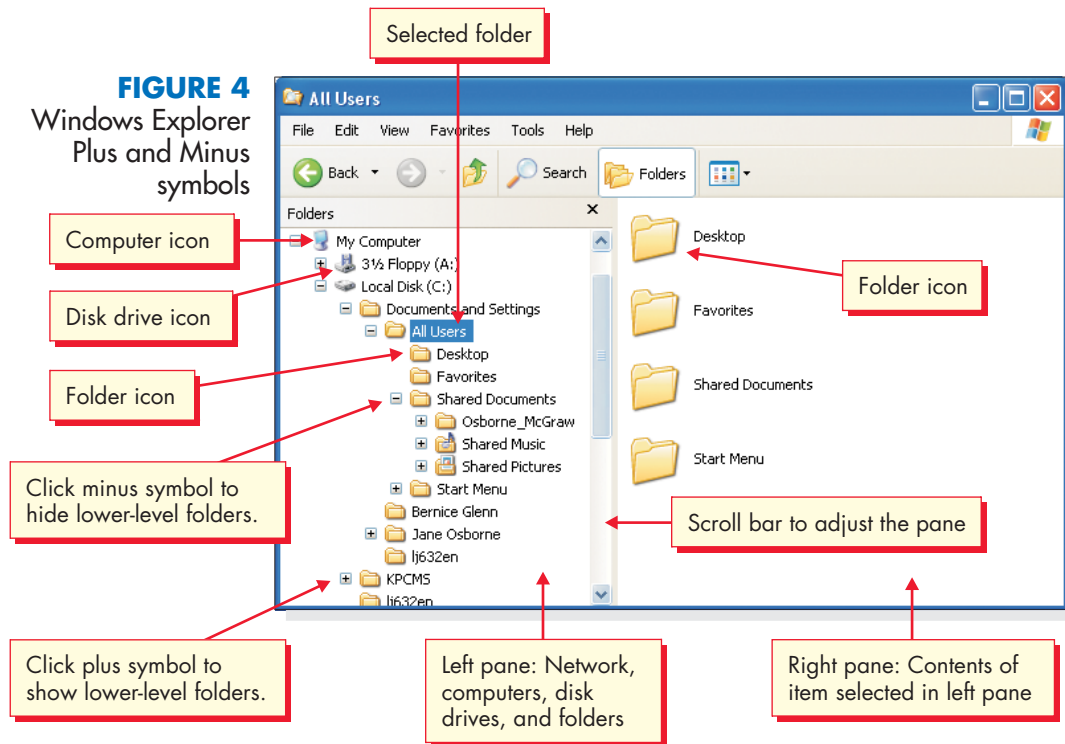


The right pane of your Windows Explorer window might look different than the one shown in Figure 3. Windows Explorer enables you to control the way in which files and folders are displayed in the right pane. The icons might be sized differently, or the contents of the folder might be arranged in a column format, showing details such as file type, date, and size.

Navigating Using Windows Explorer

Practice navigating through your computer's files and folders using the Windows Explorer. If you find that icons are displayed, you can change the display view to a detailed list (**View, Details**). This view gives you more information about the content of a file, including its size and type, and the date it was modified.

1. On the menu bar click **View, Details**. The icons on the left panel are now displayed as a text list.
2. Click the Plus symbol next to a folder or disk drive icon. The lower-level branches under that folder or drive display.



TIP: Any folder displaying a Plus symbol contains one or more folders within that folder.

3. Click the Plus symbol next to other folder icons. Notice that as you display the branches of the hierarchy, the symbol next to the folder icon changes to a Minus symbol.
4. Click a Minus symbol next to a folder icon. The hierarchy under the folder collapses and the lower-level branches under it are hidden.
5. Click a folder icon. The contents of the folder display.
6. Folders selected in the left pane are displayed in the right pane.
7. Use the scroll bars on the right sides of the two panes if the contents of either pane extend beyond the viewing area.

Copying Files and Folders

You can use Windows Explorer to manage files and folders on your computer. Common management tasks include copying files or folders, moving files or folders to new locations, renaming files or folders, deleting unneeded files or folder, and creating new file folders.

To copy a file or folder from one location to another, do the following:

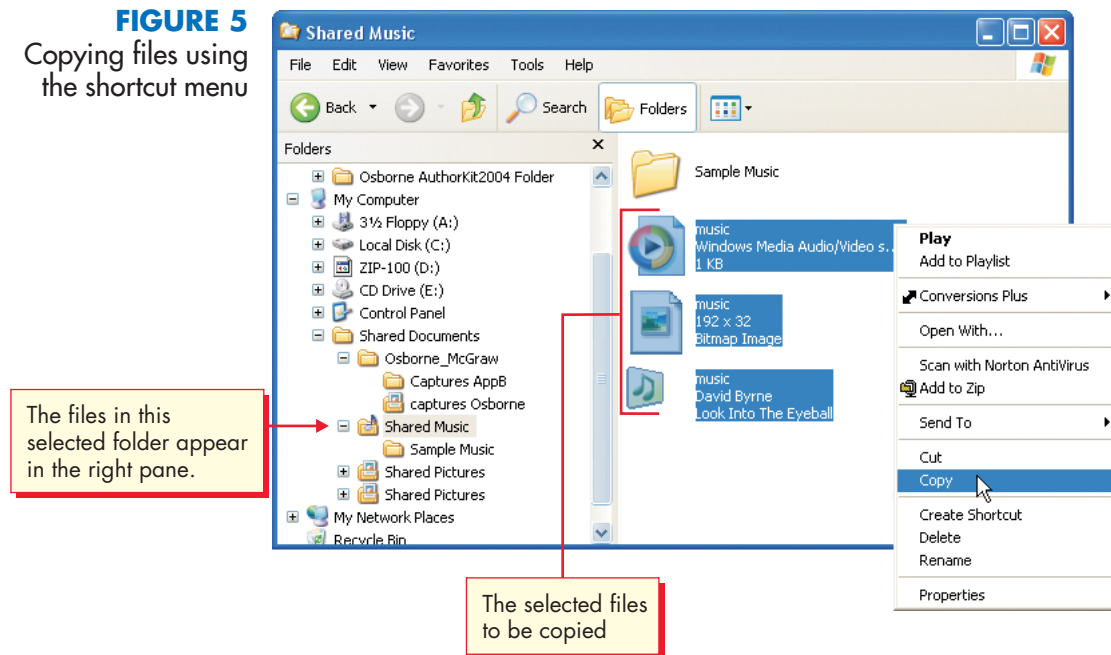
1. In the left pane, click the folder icon containing the file you wish to copy. The files within that folder appear in the right pane.



NOTE: You might have to click several folders in the hierarchy to finally display the folder containing the file you wish to copy.

2. Locate the file in the right pane and right-click it. A shortcut menu appears.

FIGURE 5
Copying files using
the shortcut menu



TIP: You can select multiple files to copy. When files are adjacent to one another, select the first file, press and hold (**Shift**), and click the last file. All files between the first and last files will be selected for copying. To select nonadjacent files, select the first file, press and hold the (**Ctrl**) key, select the remaining files, and then click.

3. Select **Copy** from the shortcut menu.
4. In the left pane, locate the folder to which you will copy the file. Right-click the folder icon. A shortcut menu appears.



TIP: Use the Plus symbols and the scroll bar to adjust the viewing area if the folder isn't displayed.

5. Choose **Paste** from the shortcut menu. The file is copied to the new folder. The file is now located in both the original location and the new location.

Copying Files to Floppy or Zip Disks

To transport a file from your school to your home, you will typically need to copy the file onto a Zip disk or a floppy disk. Zip disks can hold 100 megabytes of files compared to only 1.44 megabytes on a floppy disk. The procedure for copying to either a Zip disk or a floppy disk is the same. However, to copy to a Zip disk, a Zip drive needs to be installed in your computer.

To copy a file from your computer to a floppy disk:

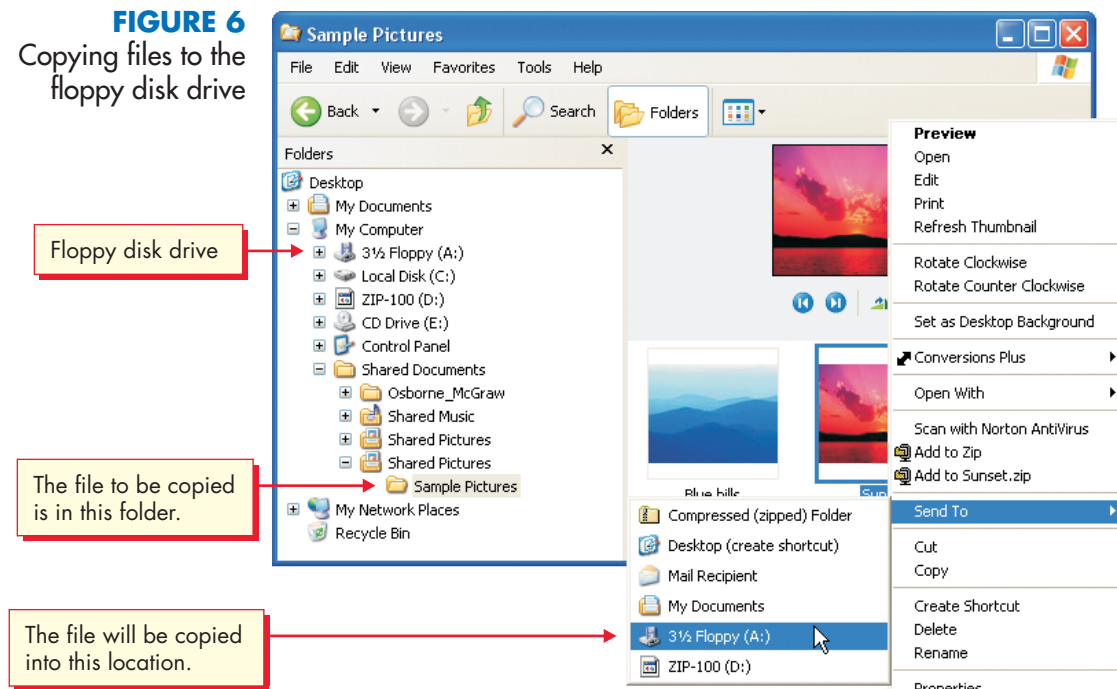
1. Insert a floppy disk in your floppy disk drive (typically this is Drive A).
2. In the left pane, click the folder icon containing the file you wish to copy. The files within that folder appear in the right pane.



NOTE: You might have to click several folders in the hierarchy to finally display the folder containing the file you wish to copy.

3. Locate the file in the right pane and right-click it. A shortcut menu appears.

FIGURE 6
Copying files to the floppy disk drive



TIP: You can select multiple files to copy to a floppy disk. When files are adjacent to one another, select the first file, press and hold **(Shift)**, and click the last file. All files between the first and last files will be selected for copying. To select nonadjacent files, select the first file, press and hold the **(Ctrl)** key, select the remaining files, and then click.

4. Choose **Send To** from the shortcut menu.
5. Choose **3½ Floppy (A:)** from the submenu. The file is copied to the disk.

Copying a file from your computer to a Zip disk is the same as copying to a floppy, except that the drive letter is different.

1. Insert a Zip disk in your Zip disk drive (typically this is Drive D).
2. In the left pane, click the folder icon containing the file you wish to copy. The files within that folder appear in the right pane.



NOTE: You might have to click several folders in the hierarchy to finally display the folder containing the file you wish to copy.

3. Locate the file in the right pane and right-click it. A shortcut menu appears.
4. Choose **Send To** from the shortcut menu.
5. Choose **Zip 100(D)** from the submenu. The file is copied to the disk.

Copying Files on to CDs

Windows XP allows you to copy files to a CD, which holds up to 650 megabytes of data. These are useful only when you plan to copy many files, generally for archiving purposes. The copying process, called “burning a CD,” will take several minutes, depending on the number of files you are copying.

There are two types of CDs:

- CD-R, which are read only. These disks cannot be changed once you have copied files to them. You can only read the information. Most programs that you buy are on CD-R installation disks.
- CD-RW, which can have files written to them (copied) multiple times.

The procedure for copying to a CD is the same as for floppy disks and Zips. Practically all new Windows XP computers come with a CD drive installed. Since computers may have different configurations for copying a file from your computer to a CD, it is best to check with your instructor for instructions.

Moving Files and Folders

You can also move file or folders from one location to another. This process is very similar to copying a file to another location. However, rather than choosing Copy from the shortcut menu when you right-click the file, you choose the **Cut** command.

To move a file or folder from one location to another, take the following steps:

1. In the left pane, click the folder icon containing the file you wish to move. The files within that folder appear in the right pane.



NOTE: You might have to click several folders in the hierarchy to finally display the folder containing the file you wish to move.

2. Locate the file in the right pane and right-click it. A shortcut menu appears.



TIP: You can select multiple files to copy. When files are adjacent to one another, select the first file, press and hold (**Shift**), and click the last file. All files between the first and last files will be selected for copying. To select nonadjacent files, select the first file, press and hold the (**Ctrl**) key, select the remaining files, and then click.

3. Select **Cut** from the shortcut menu.
4. In the left pane, locate the folder to which you will move the file. Right-click the folder icon. A shortcut menu appears.



TIP: Use the Plus symbols and the scroll bar to adjust the viewing area if the folder isn't displayed.

5. Choose **Paste** from the shortcut menu. The file is moved to the new folder. The file is located in only the new location. It has been moved from the original location.

Files can also be moved using the drag-and-drop method:

1. In the left pane, click the folder icon containing the file you wish to move. The files within that folder appear in the right pane.



NOTE: You might have to click several folders in the hierarchy to finally display the folder containing the file you wish to move.

2. Locate the file in the right pane and select it.
3. Hold down the left mouse button and drag the file to the left pane. Position the pointer over the desired folder. The folder icon is highlighted.



TIP: If the folder contains lower-level branches and your target location is within a lower level, the lower level will automatically display after a few moments. You can move the pointer near the top or bottom edge of the pane to scroll if the desired folder doesn't appear onscreen.

4. Release the mouse button when the desired folder is highlighted. The file is moved from the original location into the highlighted folder.



NOTE: You can only move a file from one location to another on the same disk when using the drag-and-drop method. If the target location is a different disk, a copy is made. You can also use the drag-and-drop method to copy a file by pressing the (**Ctrl**) key and holding down the left mouse button when selecting the file to copy.

Deleting Files and Folders

When you delete a file or folder, it is placed in the Recycle Bin. To delete a file or folder:

1. Locate the file or folder. A folder can be located in the left or right pane. A file will always be in the right pane.
2. Right-click the file or folder.

3. Choose **Delete** from the shortcut menu.



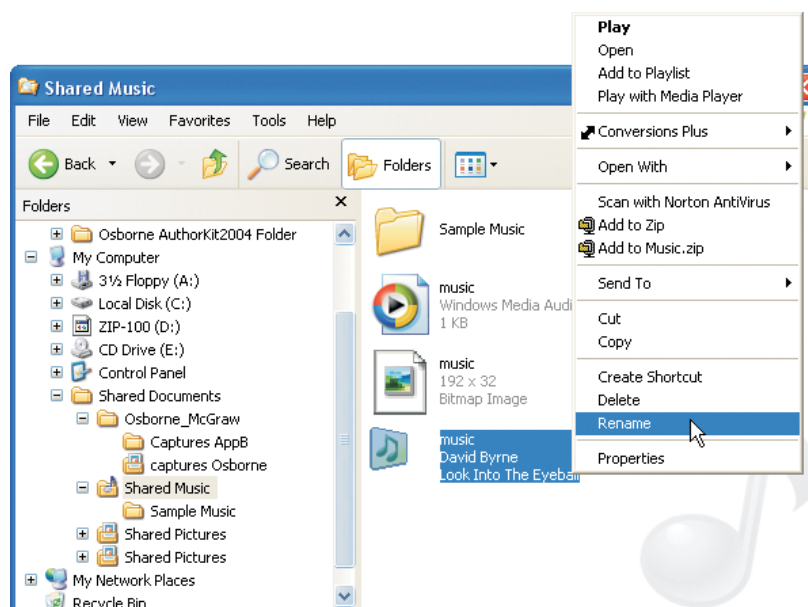
TIP: If you mistakenly delete a file or folder (and you haven't emptied the Recycle Bin), you can restore it by clicking the Recycle Bin to open it, right-clicking the item you want to restore, and choosing Restore from the shortcut menu.

Renaming Files and Folders

A common file management task is renaming files and folders. Often companies develop a unique naming structure for their files.

1. Locate the file or folder and right-click it. A shortcut menu appears.
2. Choose **Rename** from the shortcut menu.

FIGURE 7
Renaming a file



3. Delete the old filename.
4. Key the new name.
5. Click to complete the process.

Creating New Folders

Creating folders is a necessary part of file management. They are like folders in a file cabinet. Some people like to use many folders, with a few items in each one. Others use fewer folders with many files in each. You will develop your own system, but try to be consistent in your folder structure. Consistency makes it easier to locate files.

To create a new folder:

1. Select (highlight) the disk or folder in the left pane where you want to locate the new folder.
2. Choose **File** from the menu bar.
3. Choose **New** from the **File** menu.
4. Choose **Folder** from the submenu. The folder is created in the folder or disk you selected. You can now rename the folder.

To create a new folder on the desktop:

1. Right-click anywhere on the desktop. The menu appears.
2. Click **New, Folder**. A new folder appears on the desktop.
3. Rename the folder.