

# Mankato Computer Technology University

How to organize your files



## Organizing your files, let's start with your desktop:

- Cleaning up your desktop can improve your productivity and give your workspace a neat, organized look.
- Here's a step-by-step guide to help you clean up your computer desktop effectively:

# Assess the Current State

- Take a look at what's currently on your desktop.
- Note the types of files and shortcuts you have.



# Delete Unnecessary Items

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- Delete files and shortcuts that you no longer need.
- Be ruthless with items you haven't used in a while or that are duplicates.



# Create a Folder System

Organize by Category:

Create folders on your desktop to categorize files.

For example:

- Work
- Personal
- Current Projects
- To Be Filed

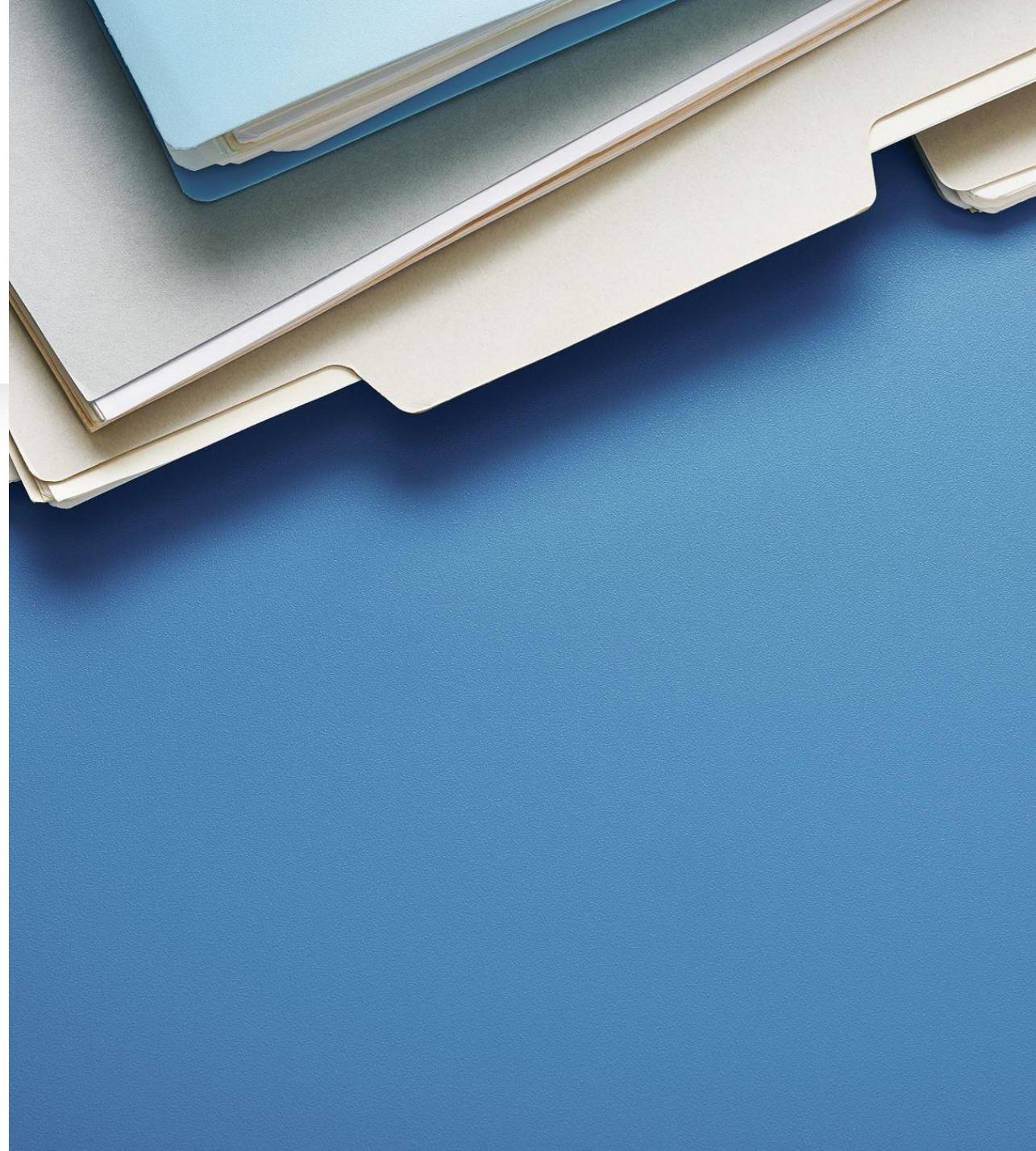
Nested Folders: Within each main folder, create subfolders to further organize your files.

For instance:

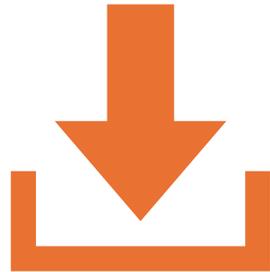
- inside the "Work" folder, you might have "Reports," "Presentations," and "Projects."

# Move Files to Appropriate Folders

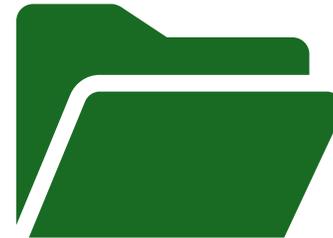
- Drag and drop files into the appropriate folders.
- This reduces clutter and helps you find files more easily.



# Use the Downloads Folder



Set your browser and other applications to save files to the Downloads folder by default.

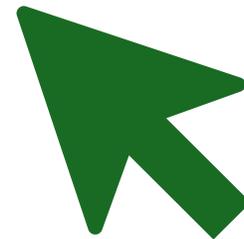


Periodically clean out the Downloads folder, moving important files to their designated folders and deleting the rest.

# Utilize the Taskbar and Dock



Pin frequently used applications to the taskbar (Windows) or dock (Mac) for quick access.



This minimizes the need for desktop shortcuts.



# Organize Icons

- Group by Function:
- Place related icons together.
  - For example, keep all work-related shortcuts in one area and personal ones in another.
- Align to Grid and Auto Arrange:
  - On Windows, right-click the desktop, go to "View," and select "Align icons to grid" and "Auto arrange icons."
  - On Mac, you can right-click and choose "Sort By" to organize your icons by criteria such as name, kind, or date.



# Use Desktop Cleanup Tools

- Use built-in tools or third-party software to help manage your desktop.
- For example:
  - **Windows:** Use the “Desktop Cleanup Wizard” to periodically clean unused shortcuts.
  - **Mac:** Use “Stacks” to automatically organize your files into groups.



# Regular Maintenance

- Set a regular schedule to clean up your desktop, such as once a week or month.
- This helps prevent clutter from building up again.





# Backup Important Files



REGULARLY BACK UP IMPORTANT FILES TO AN EXTERNAL DRIVE OR CLOUD STORAGE.



THIS ENSURES YOU HAVE COPIES IN CASE ANYTHING GOES WRONG AND KEEPS YOUR DESKTOP LESS CLUTTERED.

# Personalize Your Desktop



- Choose a clean, simple wallpaper that's not too busy.
- This makes it easier to see your icons and reduces visual clutter.

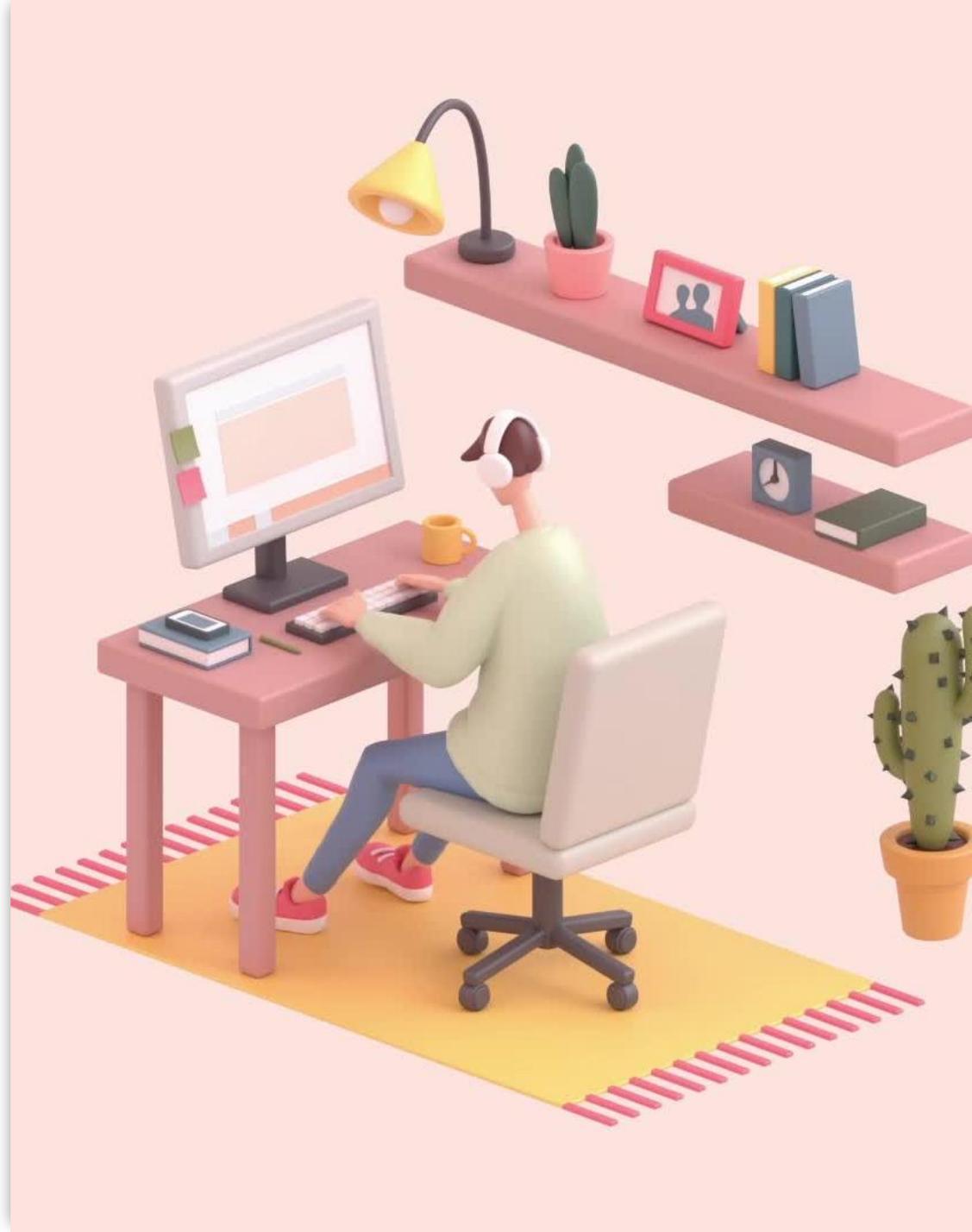


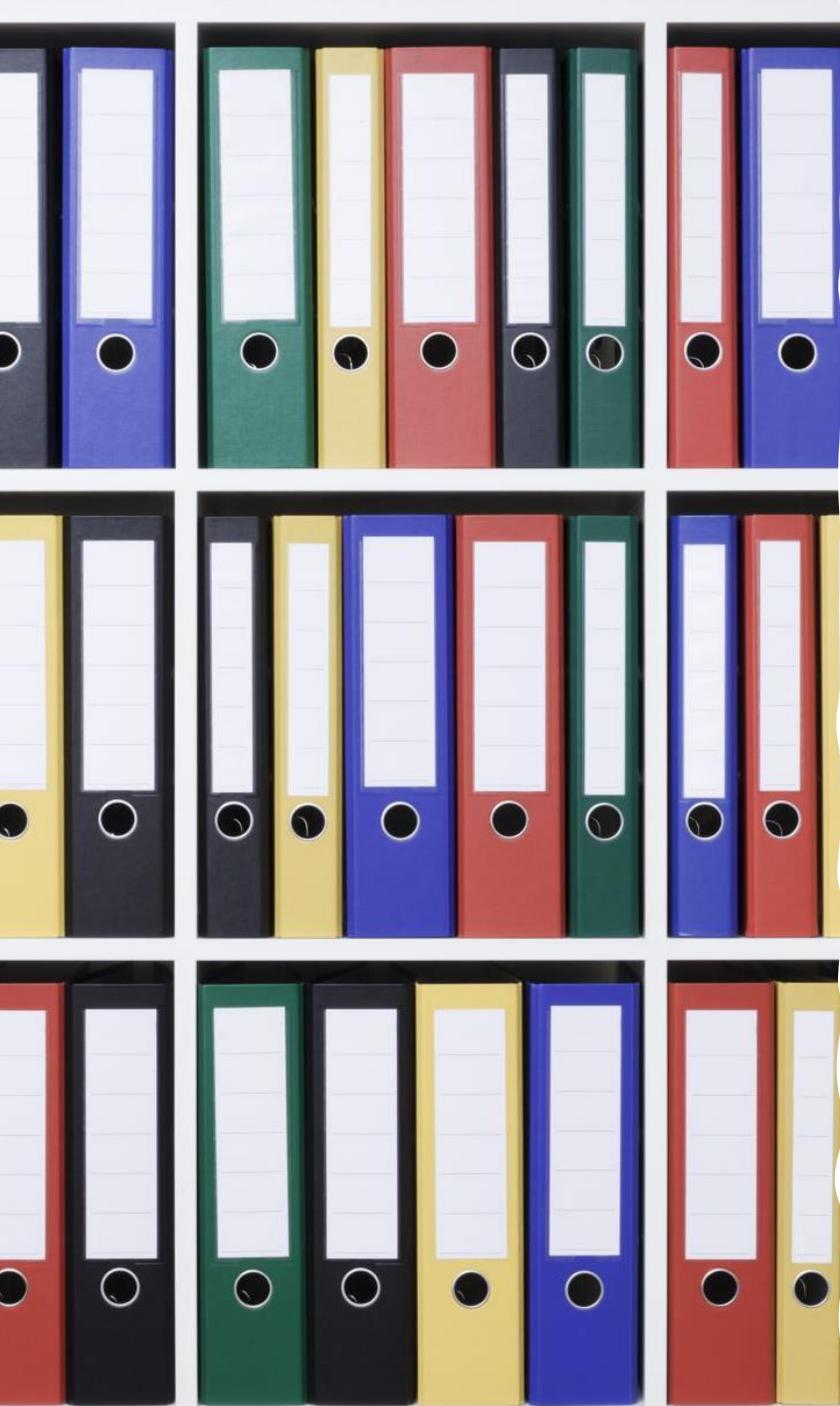
# Summary

- By following these steps, you can maintain a clean and organized desktop that enhances your productivity and makes your computer use more pleasant.
- Regular maintenance and thoughtful organization are key to preventing clutter from building up again.

# Organizing your Files

- Let's Take a look at the rest of your computer





# Plan your Structure

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- **Assess Your Needs:**
- Identify the types of files you have and how you use them.
- Common categories include:
  - work documents,
  - personal documents,
  - multimedia files (photos, videos, music),
  - software,
  - miscellaneous files.

# Create a Hierarchical Structure

Think of your file organization like a tree.

Start with broad categories and create subfolders as needed.

For example:

## Work

- Projects
- Project A
- Project B
- Reports

## Personal

- Finances
- Health
- Hobbies

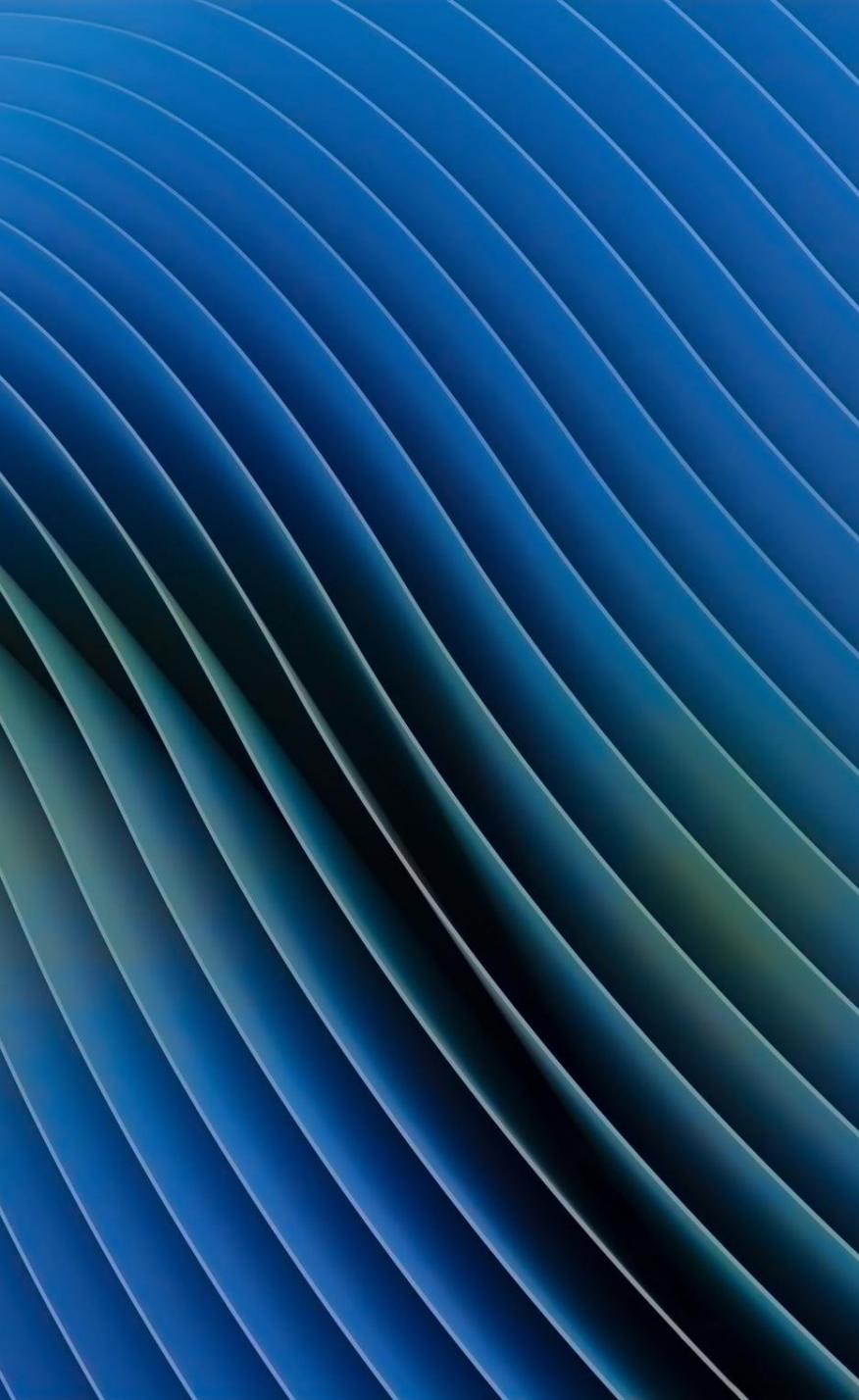
## Media

- Photos
- 2024
  - January
  - February
- Music
- Videos

# Create Folders and Subfolders

- Use clear, descriptive names for your folders and subfolders.
- Avoid using overly generic names like "Miscellaneous" or "Stuff".





# Name your Files Logically

Use descriptive, consistent naming conventions for your files.

For example, for a work document, you might use `ProjectName_DocumentType_Date`

- (e.g., `ProjectA_Report_20240616`).

Avoid using special characters in file names to prevent issues with file systems.

# Sort and Move Existing Files

Go through	Go through your existing files and move them into your new folder structure.
Discard	Discard any files you no longer need.
Be	Be ruthless with duplicates and outdated files.



# Maintain your system

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- Regularly review and clean up your files.
- Set aside time each week or month for maintenance.
- Develop a habit of saving new files directly into the correct folder.



# Use Software tools

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- Utilize file management software to help organize and manage your files.
- Some popular tools include:
  - **Windows File Explorer** or **Mac Finder** for basic file management.
  - **Evernote** or **OneNote** for organizing notes and documents.
  - **Google Drive**, **OneDrive**, **iCloud** or **Dropbox** for cloud storage and backup.



# Backup your files

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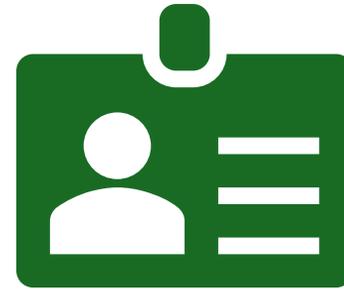
- Regularly back up your files to an external drive or a cloud storage service. This ensures you don't lose important data.

# Use Tags and Metadata

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On systems that support it, use tags and metadata to make files easier to search for.



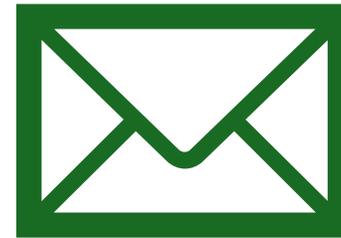
For example, you can tag photos with keywords like "Vacation" or "Family".

# Automate Where Possible

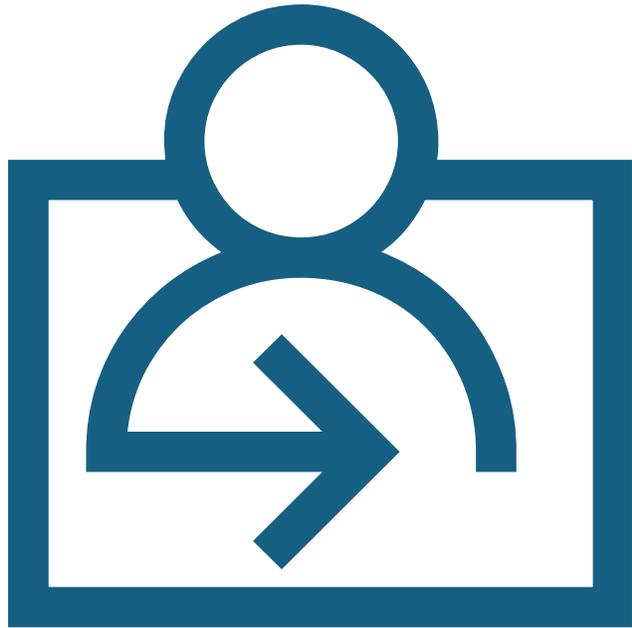
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Set up automated processes for organizing files.



For example, you can use rules in email clients to automatically sort incoming files or use scripts to organize downloaded files.



## Educate yourself and Stay updated

- Stay informed about new tools and best practices for file organization.
- Technology evolves, and there may be new methods or software that can help you stay organized more efficiently.



## Conclusion

- By implementing these strategies, you can keep your computer files organized and make it easier to find what you need when you need it.