



## COMPUTER SKILLS FOR DESIGNERS

### File Management in a Design Workflow

**File managers** are the programs like  Finder and  Explorer that allow you to browse and manage files. Adobe has its own file manager, Bridge, tailored for media-specific tasks like batch renaming files and writing metadata.

**Extensions** are the last bit of a filename, like .pdf in the example, that tell you the format of the file and tell the computer what program it belongs to.

File formats are important to designers, but Mac OS X and Windows hide them by default. Show them by adjusting your system preferences.

#### Mac

1. Open a new Finder window on your Mac.
2. In the Menu bar, go to Finder > Preferences.
3. Click on the Advanced tab.
4. Select the box that says "Show all filename extensions."

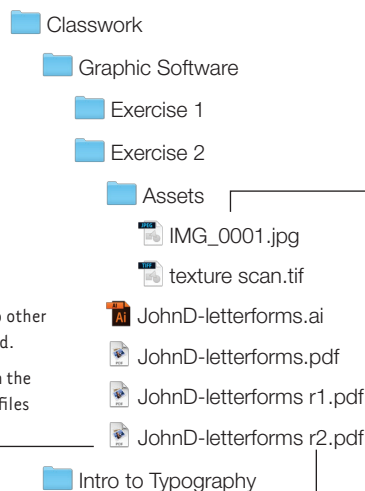
#### Windows

1. Click the Start menu and type "folder options"
2. Select either Folder Options (Vista, 7) or File Explorer Options (Win 8, 10)
3. Click on the View tab.
4. Uncheck the box that says "Hide extensions for known file types."
5. Click the "OK" button.

Be they archives of client files or mountains of photographs and videos, graphic designers inevitably build and maintain catalogs of files, images, and data for use in their work. Software like Adobe Lightroom help manage large catalogs of specific types of files, but you will always need to know how to make intelligible, searchable directories and filenames.

The example below is geared for your student work. As a professional, you might organize by client, then project type, and finally by project name—whatever makes sense for you, what you work on, and who you collaborate with.

This directory structure starts broadly and narrows down. Avoid creating dumping grounds for files where you can't tell what is what, and balance that against nesting folders when just one will do.



Things like images and text files, are collected together. This becomes more important the more assets there are. Working with assets on the Desktop or Downloads folder will lead to missing links and headaches later.



Since this file gets sent to other people, a name is included.

Including "letterforms" in the filename will allow these files to be searchable later.

Number or date each version of your work. Here, a single native file is used to work from while each iteration turned in or sent to a client after the first gets a revision number.

Spotlight Search



### Searching for Files

If you use good filenames, your computer can find and bring up files for you. On a Mac, use  Spotlight by pressing Cmd+Space or clicking the magnifying glass icon on the menu bar.  Search in Windows by opening the Start menu.

### Cloud Storage and Backups

Turns out, you can lose your flash drive or forget your laptop at home. But if you store your work in a cloud service, this isn't a problem. These services vary in size limits and features, so look for ones that fit your needs—like undelete, file history, syncing between computers, or storage limits.

Making regular backups of, not just your work files but your whole computer, to an external hard drive is important to protecting and securing your digital life. They allow you to recover from computer cataclysms and mundane accidents.

 Time Machine and  File History will make *hourly* backups of your changes when a backup drive is attached. Ask if you need help setting it up.

#### Cloud Services to Store + Sync

UH provides students with a 1 TB OneDrive for Business account. Sign in with your CougarNet ID and password (add @cougar.net.uh.edu to your username) at <https://login.microsoftonline.com>.

If you have an Adobe Creative Cloud subscription, it comes with 20 GBs of cloud storage. Turn it on in the Assets tab of the Creative Cloud app.

Google Drive comes with 15 GBs free, and their 100 GB plan is \$20/year.

Dropbox free accounts are limited to 2 GBs, and paid accounts offer an extended feature set.