Topic 02 - Windows folders and files

File Explorer, or Windows Explorer as it was known prior to Windows 8, is the application which displays your folders and files.

For this and many other lessons you will find it easier if you have a mouse rather than just using the touch sensitive pad on your keyboard.

This exercise is quite tricky but not difficult. Just have patience and do one step at a time. It is a critical part of your basic knowledge. One of the major complaints of computer users is that they cannot find old files. This is because they did not create a filing structure. This topic gives you all the skill you need to create a meaningful structure. In a later exercise you will use Search to find missing items.

Reread the topic a number of times. Initially it may seem complex but the reality is that the filing structure is actually very simple. If you don't master the section on creating and renaming folders you will struggle with later topics – repeat, repeat, repeat.

Structure of Windows filing system

In this exercise the list of items under "Quick access" is described as the Left Side and that under "Frequent folders" is the Right Side.

If you do not have the **Ribbon** on display : Right click at the approximate spot shown in the elipse. The option "Minimise the Ribbon"

will be ticked. Clear the tick by left clicking in the box.
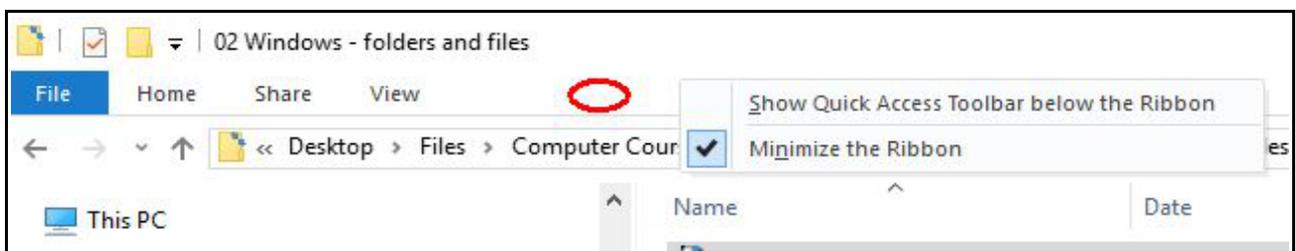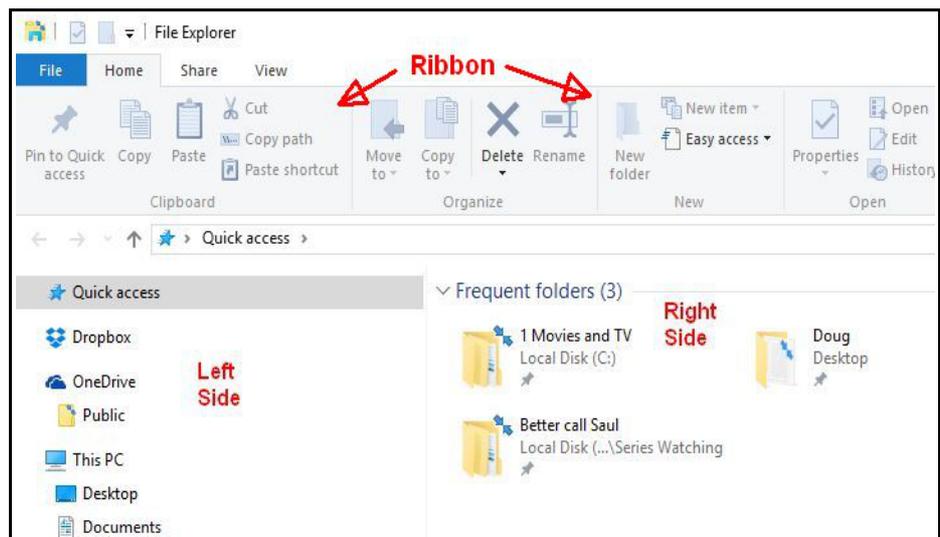
For the moment ignore all but "**This PC**" in the left side. If you click on the small right arrow to the left of "This PC" it will expand the display and show two types of items

- Shortcuts – such as Desktop, Documents etc. These allow you to get quickly to commonly used folders. More about these later.
- Devices – that is hard disks, DVDs/CDs, USB sticks, external hard drive etc.
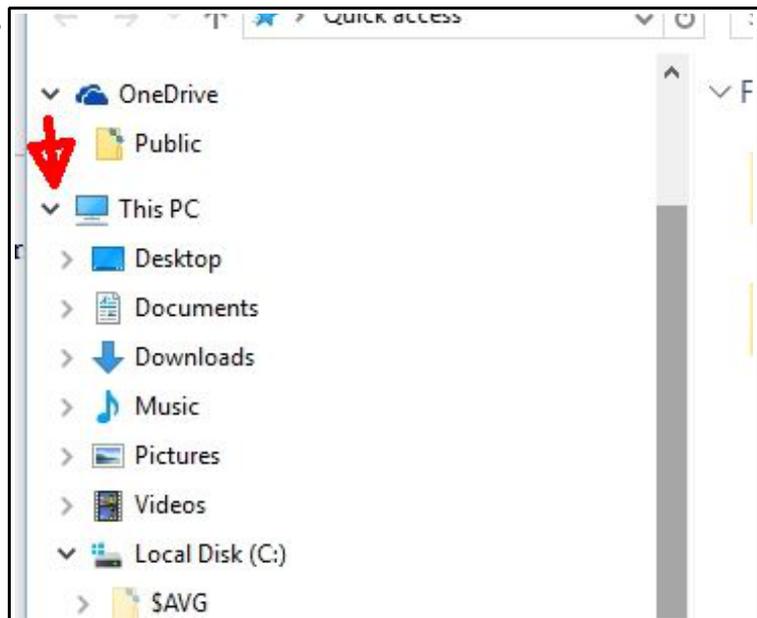
Note that sometimes "**Local Disk**" may be replaced by alternative names including the serial number of the disk. You can rename it if required but cannot change the "(C)".

In the exercise we will now refer to it as **disk C**. This is the default letter allocation of the primary disk partition. Depending upon the initial installation done by the computer manufacturer you may also have a **secondary partition** on the same physical disk, which may then appear as **disk D**.

When you connect other devices, e.g. a usb memory stick, you will notice a higher letter allocation. In the example above a memory stick **"DOUG SMALL"** has been inserted and was allocated letter **"E".**
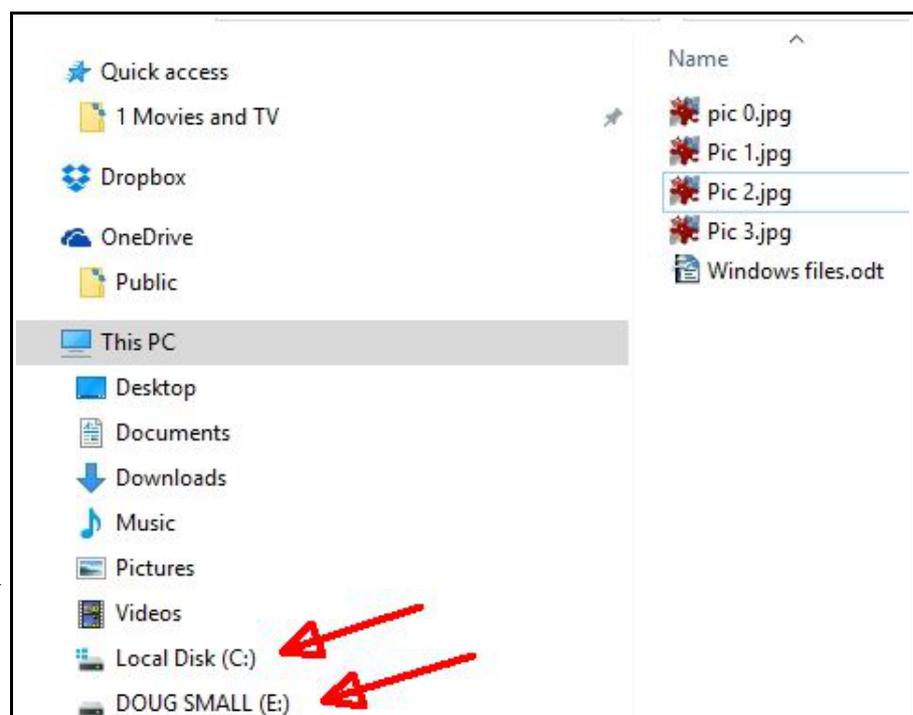
A & B are now rarely used as these were allocated to floppy and stiffy disks in the early years of the PC. The letters are allocated as the devices are attached so that Windows can uniquely identify them since there is no requirement that their names are unique.

For each device the filing structure is a simple hierarchy, that is like the roots of a tree. It consists of folders which may contain sub-folders or content (e.g. Pictures, documents,

programs, etc.). You can think of folders much like physical filing cabinets.

Each folder can contain an effectively unlimited number of sub-folders or content items.
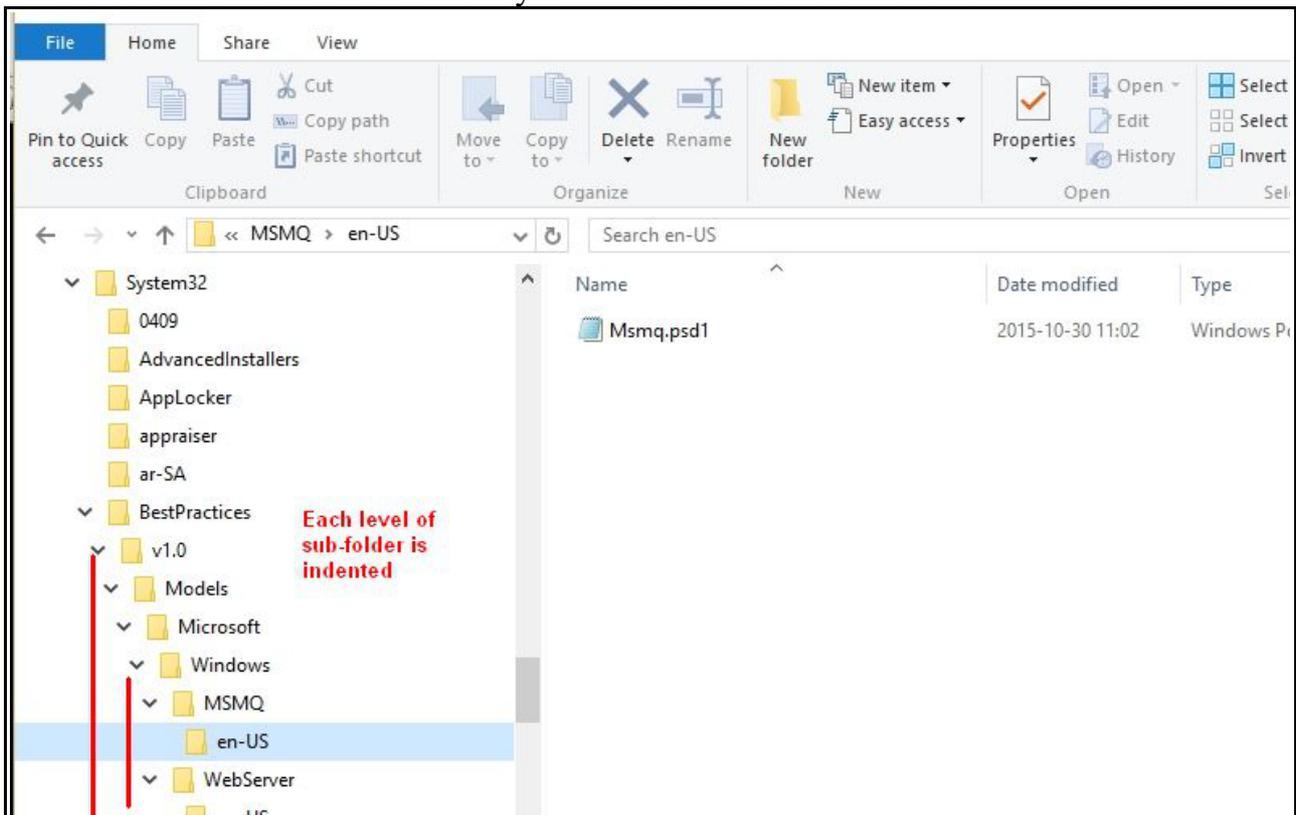
There is no realistic limit to the depth of creating sub-folders within sub-folder within..... In the above example you can see each level of sub-folder is indented with respect to its parent. You can see at the bottom of the left side that **MSMQ** and **WebServer** are indented to the same degree. Hence they are both sub-folders of the same parent **"Windows".**

It is this structure which allows you to create something meaningful for you. For example, in your Pictures folder you may create a structure such as

- Year 1
  - Event 1
    - My pictures
    - My videos
    - Partners pictures etc.
  - Event 2 etc.
- Year 2
- Year 3

One of the tricks is to try and limit the number of items in a folder so that the list fits on a single screen and you don't need to scroll to see all items.

Exercise 1 – Changing the display.

Windows has an annoying default option of not displaying the extension of known file types. For example, "**test.jpg**" will only be displayed as "**test**". This means you have to look at the Type column to identify if it is a document/spreadsheet/picture etc. It is not only annoying but it is potentially very dangerous as you will learn from the lesson on protection from malware.

1. Open File Explorer .

2. The top menu shows "File Home Share View"

3. Select "**File**" then "**Change folder and search options**" or "**Options**".

4. This will bring up a small window headed "**Folder Options**"

5. On the top tab bar select "**View**". Deselect the options "**Hide empty drives**" and "**Hide extensions for known file types**" so that their boxes are empty. The small rectangles are toggle switches. Clicking them will insert a tick and clicking again clears.

6. For interest, the option "**Hidden files and folders**" has circles with one containing a dark inner circle. These are known as **radio switches.** Think of an old radio. Only one can be selected and clicking one releases the other. You can have radio switches containing more than two choices but they work the same.

7. Click OK to complete.
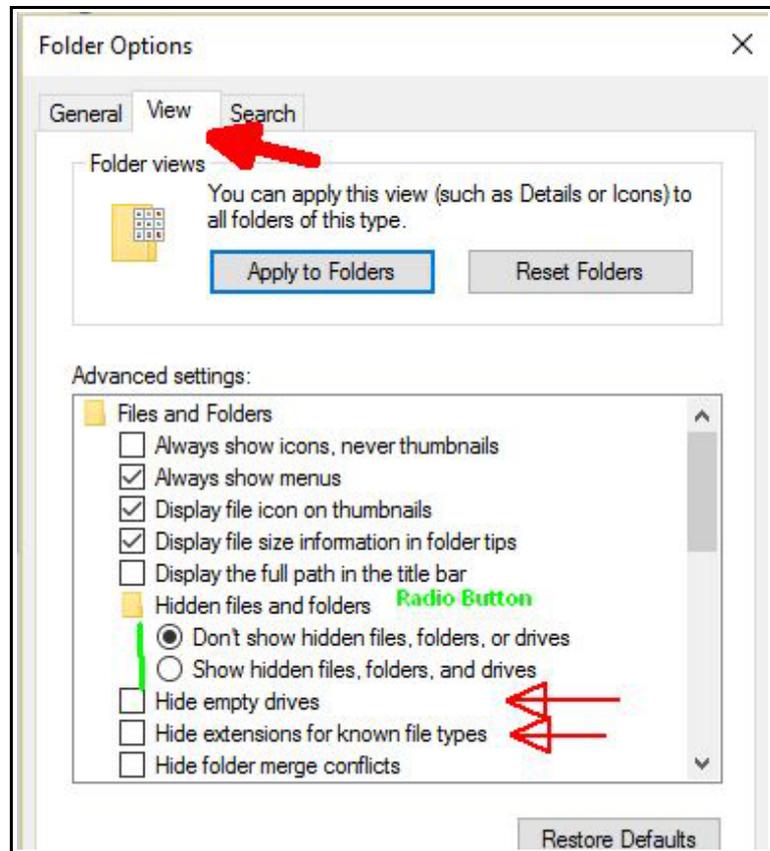
Exercise 2 – Creating and renaming folders

There are many alternative ways of doing the following so you may learn to eliminate some of the steps with practice. The exercise primarily uses left and right mouse controls but at times you may find it easier to use the options in the Ribbon Display.

1. In general the mouse is used as follows
   • **LEFT click** will **SELECT** an item, it will show with a light blue background. If not specifically mentioned clicking implies Left Clicking

- a **quick** <mark>DOUBLE LEFT</mark> **click** will **ACTION** an item. Don'r wait too long between clicks - you may find the name is highlighted in a box and you are in the mode to **RENAME** the item.
- <mark>RIGHT</mark> **click** provides a set of **OPTIONS** with a pop up menu.

2. There are a lot of steps in the following exercise but they are colour coded to help. Once you understand the process it will go quickly

3. Open File Explorer. If disk "C" is not displayed first <mark>click</mark> on the small right arrow which appears to the left of "**This PC**". <mark>Left</mark> click on "**Local Disk (C:)**" to select it.

4. Disk C should be highlighted in the left side and the cursor over it. <mark>Right</mark> click and select the option "**New**" and then "**Folder**". While the name "New Folder" is still highlighted you can change its name. However, we will use the renaming option in a later step so Click anywhere on the screen to complete the folder creation.

5. **If** there is not a list of folders below disk C then <mark>click</mark> on the **arrow** which appears **to the left** of disk C

6. Find "**New Folder**" in the left colum, <mark>left</mark> **click** to select and then <mark>right</mark> **click** and select the rename option and allocate a new name "**Computer Class Exercises**" and press Enter.
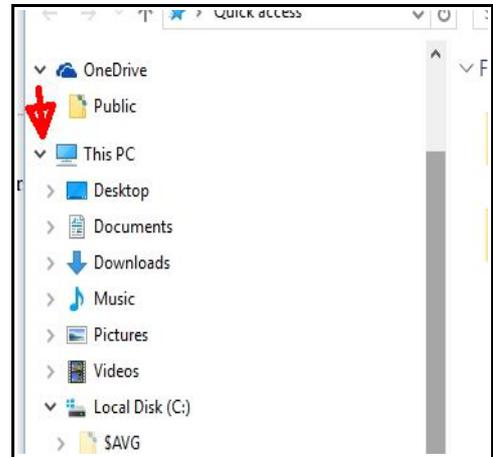
You have successfully created and renamed the folder. We will now create sub-folders.

1. <mark>Double left</mark> **click** on the **Computer Class Exercises** folder in the **left side** and the right side should change and display **"This folder is empty"**. <mark>Click</mark> in open space in the **right side.** In an open space <mark>right</mark> click and repeat the procedure to create two new sub-folders and rename them "**Test Folder 1**" and "**Test Folder 2**".
2. In the left side <mark>click</mark> **on the right arrow** which appears to the **left of** "Computer Classes .." and it should show the two new folders indented.

1. If you click on the "Computer Class Exercises" folder and <mark>right</mark> click you can delete the folder so that you can repeat the exercise until it becomes second nature. However, you will require these folders for the next topic.
2. Congrats, you now know how to create folders and sub-folders and rename them. You can think about how to structure your documents and pictures folders.
3. There are many ways to achieve the same results including use of the top ribbon bar.