

## BACKGROUND

Keeping files organized on a computer can be extraordinarily challenging. It's not enough to have all of your work stored in one giant folder called **MyStuff**. You need to create folders ("directories") that organize your files into logical groups.

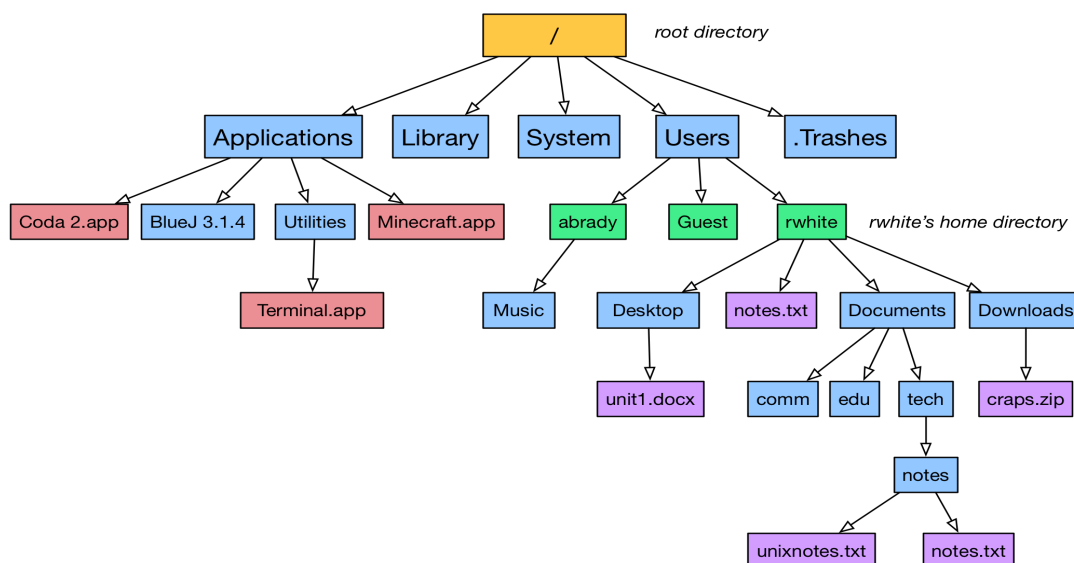
## ORGANIZING THINGS

Whenever you have multiple "things," there are multiple ways to organize them. If you have a bunch of shoes, you can line them up in lots of different ways: by height, by color, by style, by occasion... you could even just have them lined up randomly.



Likewise, there are a variety of strategies that can be used to organize the files on your computer. In the diagram shown here, there are 7 vertical layers of files. This computer operating system will determine some of this structure, particularly the first 3 levels. You should never rename, rearrange, or delete files and folders in these system directories!

Most files of interest are in the home folders listed in the **Users** directory. **rwhite**, for example, owns the files that are listed below that folder. But within that folder, files are organized in a number of ways, including by *where* they are located (on the **Desktop**, for example), or the *context* of the file (communications, education, technology), or what *type* of documents are in the folder ("notes"). You might choose to place all the files from the year 2018 in one folder and the files for 2019 in another.



## A LIST OF FILES

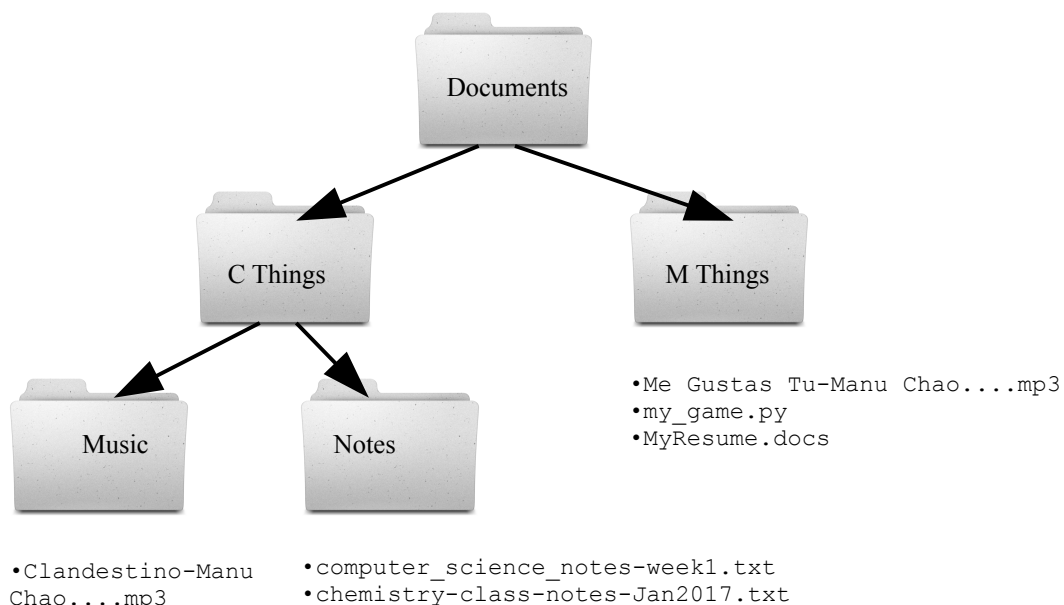
Consider the list of mixed-up files here that have been stored on the Desktop of your computer. We're going to organize them logically into a series of 5-12 folders based on whatever system or strategy *you* think is appropriate.

1. Begin by noticing similarities in the different types of files, as well as some of the differences.
2. Think of folder names that will do a good job of describing the files they contain.
3. Think about how to place smaller folders into larger folders to get things more organized.

computer\_science\_notes-week1.txt  
happy\_birthday.py  
friends\_at\_beach.jpg  
IMG\_5048.jpg  
Plane Tickets-July 2017.pdf  
MyResume.docx  
Je ne t'aime plus-Manu Chao-  
Clandestino.mp3  
lola\_puppy.jpg  
computer\_science\_notes-week2.txt  
Sandcastles-Beyonce-Lemonade.mp3  
packing\_list.txt  
chemistry-class-notes-Feb2017.txt  
YouTube-Fail Army-3.mp4  
Hotel Reservation-July 2017.pdf  
lola\_puppy2.jpg  
IMG\_5672.jpg  
YouTube-How to Study.mp4  
chemistry-class-notes-Jan2017.txt  
lola\_beach.jpg

lola\_park.jpg  
IMG\_2379.jpg  
computer\_science\_notes-week3.txt  
biology-class-notes-Apr2018.txt  
biology-class-notes-Jan2018.txt  
Internship Application.pdf  
Me Gustas Tu-Manu Chao-Proxima Estacion:  
Esperanza.mp3  
goodbye\_world\_program.py  
hello\_world\_program.py  
Love Drought-Beyonce-Lemonade.mp3  
my\_game.py  
Clandestino-Manu Chao-Clandestino.mp3  
EmploymentApplication.pdf  
Formation-Beyonce-Lemonade.mp3  
All Night-Beyonce-Lemonade.mp3  
Bus tickets-July 2017.pdf  
biology-class-notes-May2018.txt  
best\_program\_ever.py  
IMG\_2300.jpg

An example of a *bad* organizational system would be organizing them by initial letter, and then maybe by file type.



You can guess why this is a bad system. I have music files in completely different parts of my system, and unrelated things like a game and a resume grouped in the same folder. I'd have a hard time finding anything if this was my system.

### **FOLDERS (Activity)**

In the space below, draw a nested series of folders to organize the list of files given above, along with the files each folder contains in the space below. You should have 5-12 folders (more is better) organizing the files, and a sample of filenames (at least one or two for each folder) written into each folder as indicated by the organizational logic you choose.

Then, answer the questions on the next page.

## QUESTIONS

1. What general strategy did you use above for organizing your files (by date? by time? by filetype? by context? some combination of the above?)?
2. How many separate folders did you end up organizing your files into? What were those groupings/directories called?
3. How many vertical levels of folders did you end up having in your file organization system?
4. On your own computer, do you tend to keep your files all in one or two directories, or do you have a more complex hierarchy of folders to keep things organized? Why do you use that system?