Managing Files and Folders in Windows 7

The operation of every single computer program involves reading and processing the instructions found in a file. From something as basic as Notepad to Windows 7 itself, everything you can do and everything you see on the screen is a result of information being read and processed from a file. In this lesson we will explore different file and folder management tasks.

Creating and Naming Folders

You can create a folder just about anywhere on your computer in one of two ways. If you are creating a new folder on the desktop, or in a folder, right-click on an empty area, point to New, and click Folder (at the top of the list):
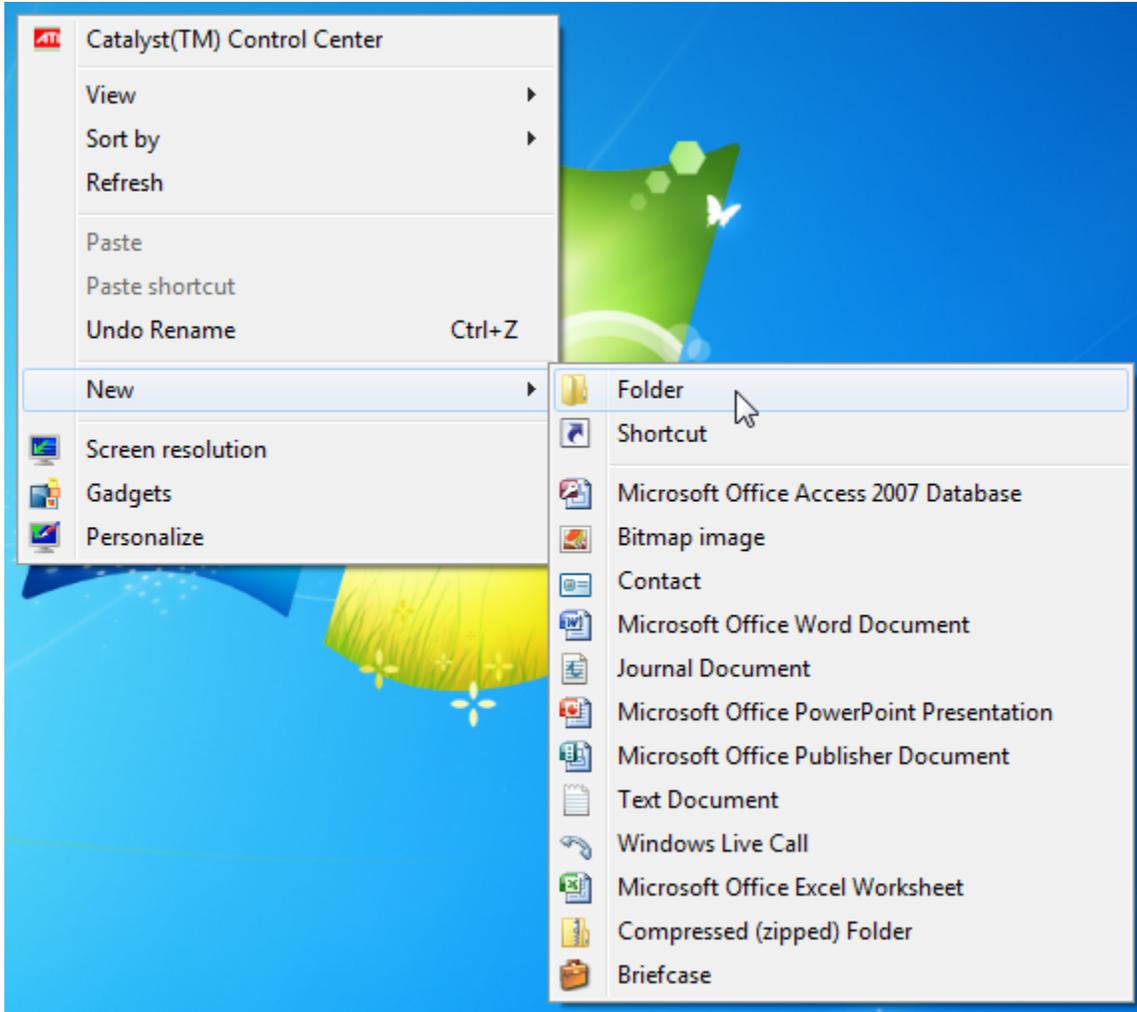

Figure 1: Right-click menu on desktop.

Give the folder a name and then press Enter.

Windows allows you to create a new folder at the same time you are saving a file. For example, if you wanted to make a new folder for WordPad documents, you can do so while saving the file. When you see the Save As dialog appear, click the "New folder" command:
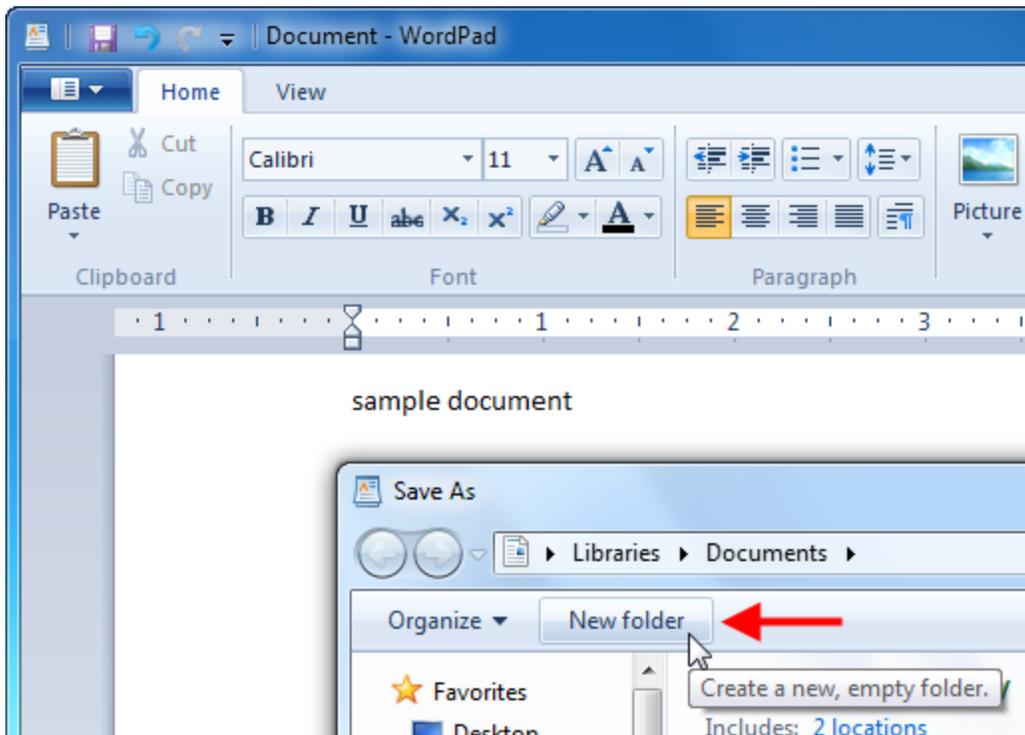
Figure 2: New folder option in Save As dialog.

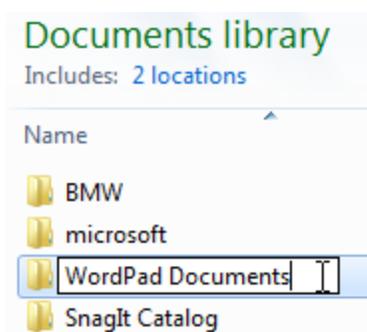A new folder icon will appear. Give the folder a name and then press Enter:

Figure 3: Naming a new folder.

In order to save something in the new folder, double-click the new folder's icon, give the file that is to be saved a name, and then click Save.

Renaming and Deleting Folders

You can rename or delete a folder at any time (unless you are trying to save something inside a folder that you are also trying to delete; Windows prevents these errors). Simply right-click on the folder and select Rename or Delete. This can be done with folders in Windows Explorer, in a Save dialog box, or folders on the desktop:
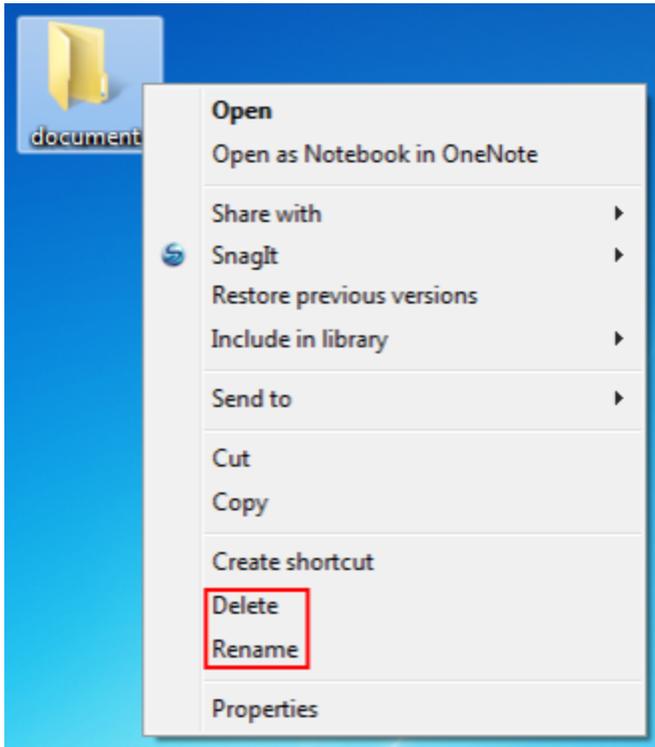
Figure 4: Delete and Rename options.
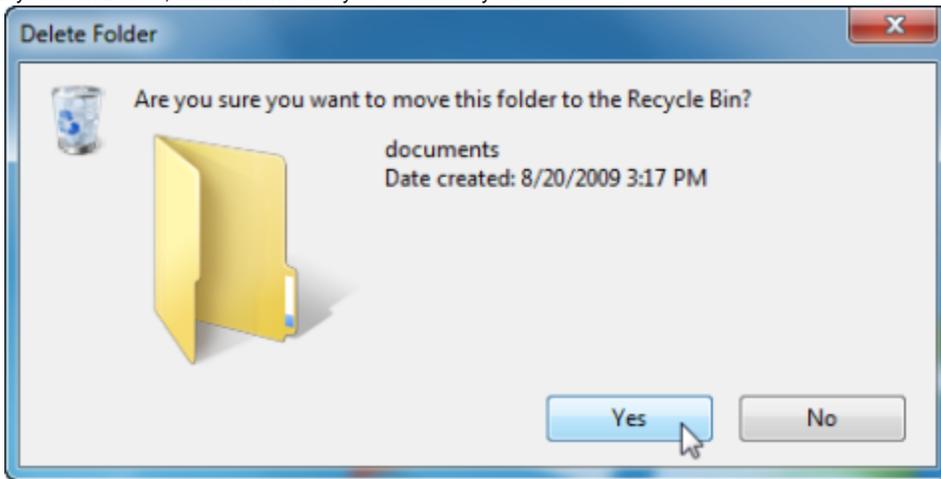If you click Delete, Windows will ask you to confirm your choice:

Figure 5: Delete folder dialog.

Windows will not allow you to delete a folder if any of the files contained inside are already in use.

Creating and Naming Files

Creating a file is easy to do and is very similar to creating a folder. If you are not using a program but know that you want to create a new text document (usable by Notepad and others), right-click on an empty space on the desktop or in a Save dialog, point to New, and then choose the file type:
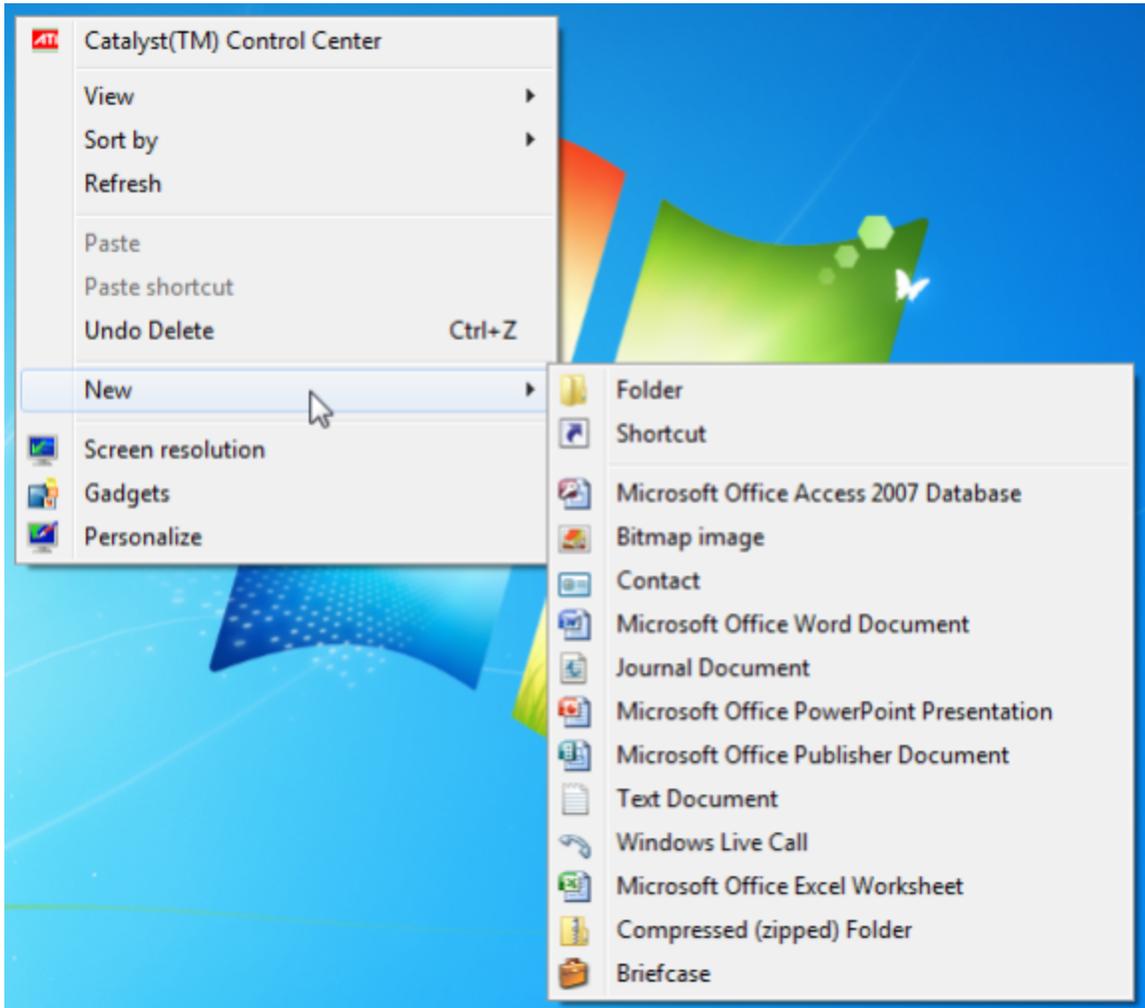
Figure 6: Right-click menu on desktop.

When you see the new icon appear on the desktop or in the Save dialog box, type a new name for the file and press Enter.
Sometimes programs are capable of saving a file in more than just one format. Paint, for example, can save an image file in eight different image formats:
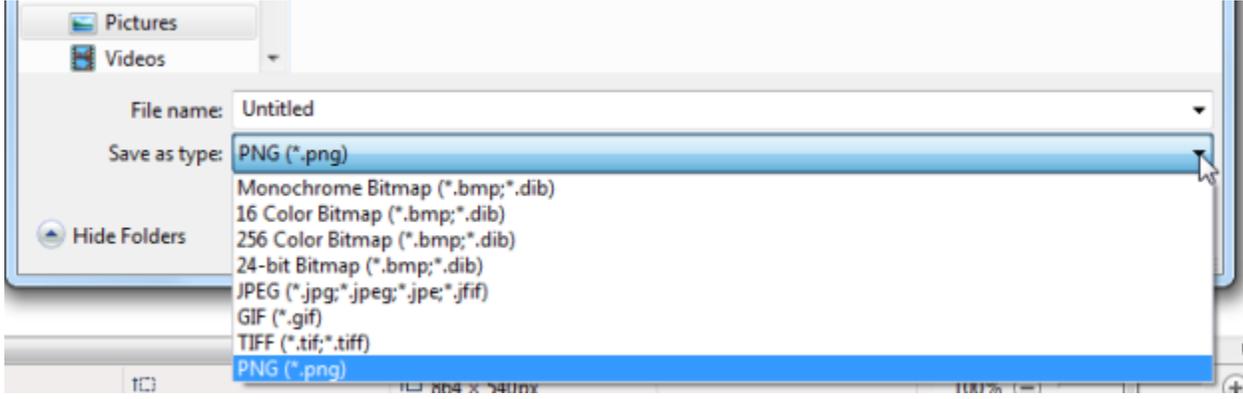

Figure 7: File types you can save as.

Click the pull-down arrow beside the Save as type box and choose a format. Then enter a name in the File name box and click Save. (Notice too that Paint will save a file by default in the Pictures library.)

Renaming and Deleting Files

As you may have guessed, you can rename and delete a file just as you can a folder. Right-click the file and click the appropriate command. Keep in mind that you cannot rename nor delete a file while it is in use:
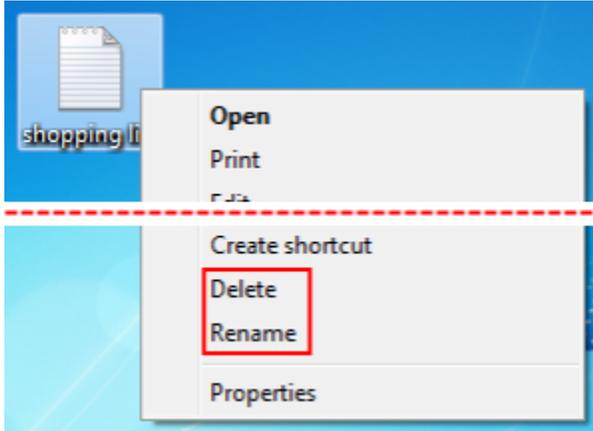

Figure 8: Delete and Rename options.

Cutting, Copying, and Pasting Files and Folders

Nearly every file type and every folder can be cut, copied, and pasted. If you are not already familiar with these commands, they are used extensively by many programs.

The Cut command will remove the information from one location and store it in a special part of the operating system called the clipboard. The clipboard is a repository memory location that can only hold one item, but that item can be of any size. Using the Paste operation, the object that was cut can be placed somewhere else one time.

The Copy command makes a 1:1 copy of the original and keeps it in the clipboard. The object can then be pasted as many times as needed into a location. Whenever a new item is cut or copied to the clipboard, it overwrites the old object.

These concepts are best shown by example. Imagine you are looking at a word processing document and want to perform some editing on the document:

Figure 9: Layout of a word document.

You want to remove the title, blend the Opening Paragraph into Paragraph 1, and move Paragraph 3 before Paragraph 2. You can simple erase the title if it is no longer needed, though you could cut it if you like. Next, combine the opening paragraph and Paragraph 1 together:

Opening Paragraph / Paragraph 1

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 3

Conclusion

Figure 10: Edited layout of a word document.

To cut and paste Paragraph 3 and put it in front of Paragraph 2, highlight Paragraph 3:

Opening Paragraph / Paragraph 1

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 3

Conclusion

Figure 11: Paragraph 3 highlighted.

Then press Ctrl + X to cut the object. It will be removed from the document and saved in the memory of the computer:

Opening Paragraph / Paragraph 1

Paragraph 2

|

Conclusion

Figure 12: Paragraph 3 cut.

Click between the opening and Paragraph 2 (press Enter to create a new space if you like) and then press Ctrl + V to paste Paragraph 3:

Opening Paragraph / Paragraph 1

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 3

Conclusion

Figure 13: Paragraph 3 pasted.

The same operation of Ctrl + X and Ctrl + V works for files and folders too. You can cut a folder from the desktop and paste it just about anywhere using these commands. They are also accessible by right-clicking on a file or folder and clicking Cut:
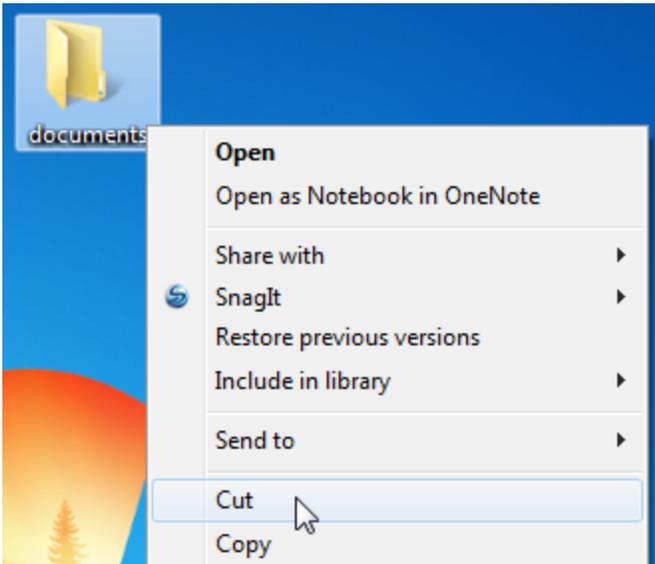
Figure 14: Right-click dialog for folder.

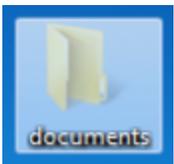An icon that has been "cut" will appear faded while placed on the clipboard:

Figure 15: Faded icon.

Now open a target location, right-click inside the folder, and click Paste. If you want to place the same file or folder in many locations, use the Copy command. The original object will remain where it is, and a copy will be placed in the clipboard. Now you can Paste the object as many times and you like into many different locations. The copied object will remain in memory until it is overwritten by cutting or copying something else, or the computer is restarted.