General concept

Folder structures should be as narrow as possible and as deep as necessary, so you can find any file quickly with less clicks.

Work area folders

Divide document types by folders for Pictures, Video, Documents, Music on the highest level. As separator we are using blank characters.

Any folder inside these root folders are numbered in a decimal ascending way. Leading zeros are added to complete the begin of the folder name. The folder contains the following schema:

XX Work area name
Example: 04 LNC Docs

Files and projects

To name the files and projects which belong to a specific working area. These elements are tied to the creation date of the file or folder. In this element you can then add the corresponding information. To create the name of the file or project folder take the current date and write it at the beginning in the format of: YYMMDD. Then add the corresponding name. This name should be unique and meaningful.

- 221226 LNC Docs file structure presentation.pptx (file)
- 230106 mothers birthday (folder)
  - 230106 mothers birthday 01.png (file)

Example structure

- 01 Workarea A
- 02 Workarea B
  - 01 Subarea B1
  - 02 Subarea B2
    - 221222 ProjectForB2
      - 221223 PresentationFileB2.pptx

Key takeaways

- Consistency
- Cloud storage & redundancy
- Regular offline backup
- You provide shared elements to colleagues
- Set expiration on shared elements
- Account security

Consistency

For this concept to work you need to take your time to clean up the existing folders and files upfront. This takes a lot of time and can be a complex process. If you need help with automation there is a lot of documentation on this site about PowerShell driven cleanups. After you cleaned up existing data you have to follow the concept 100% strictly. Consistency is the key to an organized, findable and transparent data structure.

Cloud storage & redundancy

You have to save your data to a save place (USB memory sticks are **not** a **save** solution!). To achieve this, cloud storage is the simplest, cheapest and best solution. Choose your favorite cloud provider and start a free test version. Currently one of the best solutions to store files and data is Microsoft's OneDrive.

Try uploading the entire tidy structure to your cloud storage and only accessing the data there from that point on. This will prevent you from having multiple versions of the files in different locations. Central data storage should be the cloud storage. If possible, you should also synchronize the data somewhere locally, so that in the worst case the data is still available somewhere. Redundant data storage should not be left to the cloud providers alone, although all major cloud data stores store data multiple times for failover.

Sharing recommendations

When sharing files or folders with colleagues, if possible, make sure you can share the files from your storage solution. This brings the advantage that you already have the documents in the correct structure with you and the file in your folder structure always has the latest status. Thus you have after the completion of the collaboration without additional work the right document cleanly stored.

Always try to set expiration dates when creating shares. This way you can make sure that after the end of the collaboration the corresponding access is removed. Also make sure that you always distribute permissions according to the principle of least privileges.

Regular offline backups

Make a copy of your cloud storage regularly (every month or every weekend) to a storage device that is not attached to the Internet. A good medium here are (if possible encrypted) USB memory sticks. This measure ensures that if the cloud storage or old files are encrypted by a virus, that a large part can be found in the offline backup unencrypted.

Account security

Any accounts that have sensitive data should have at least a 14 digit password today. This password should not be deduceable from any characteristics of your life. Also, make sure that you use a multi factor for all sensitive accesses. This can be for example a confirmation email or an SMS.

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