



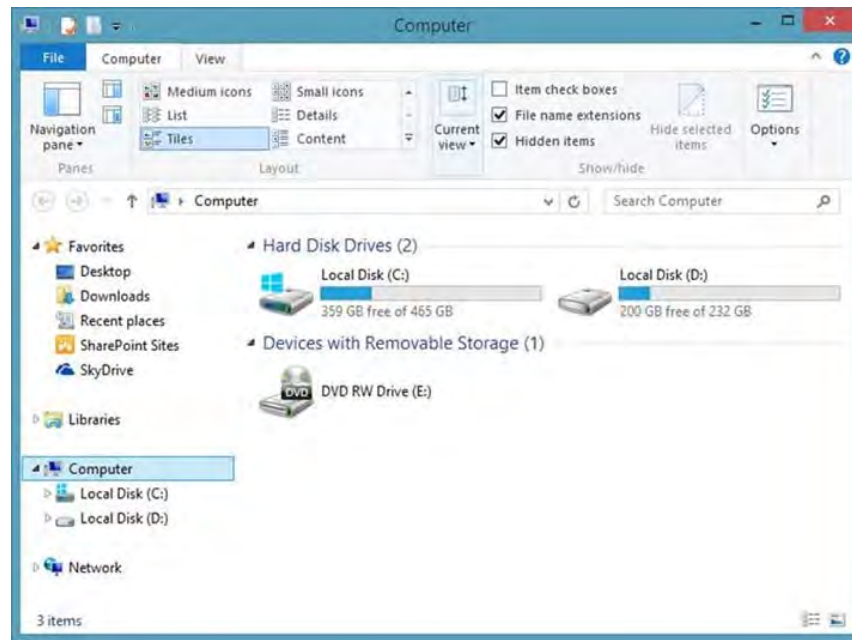
## File Explorer New Features, and Back to Basics

The file manager in Windows is getting new features in the Windows 11 annual update, (version 22H2). While I still do NOT suggest installing 22H2 for everybody (see below), it's behaving well, mostly, and ready for most users of Windows 11.

### Back to Basics

First, here's a refresher on Windows File Explorer and where your files are in Windows. Let's start with a stand-alone Windows computer. Your computer has a yellow folder on the system tray, at the bottom of the screen. Click that to open File Explorer. (Some Windows versions call it Explorer.) In the left column, most systems have an entry "This PC" or you might have renamed it to match the computer name. Click there. There's a drive marked C:, sometimes with the name 'Local Disk (C:)' or sometimes it is 'Boot (C:)' or 'Windows (C:)'. You can right-click that drive and rename it to whatever you want, but the important part is that the C: drive is where Windows lives, and where the Users folder is. (Except on large corporate networks, but today we're just looking at single computers and systems in small offices.)

Why is it C: ? History. In the 1980's, hard drives were not in every computer, but diskette drives were, and the first one was the a: drive, and the second one was the b: drive. The hard drive became c: if it was installed. Now, diskette drives have gone away, but the drive letters a: and b: are left unused, so the Windows drive is very consistently the c: drive.



Look for the folder `c:\Users`. That's where your login accounts live. Inside that folder, there is one folder for each login on the computer, plus the 'Public' folder, which isn't a login account, but it does hold some shared settings. Leave 'Public' alone.

Inside the folder matching your user login name, there are a lot of folders to just leave alone, too. But these folders are important and useful:

1. Desktop: This is where the manually-pinned desktop shortcuts live, and anything that you chose to 'save to desktop'. CAUTION: Clutter in this folder reduces available memory, so it's not a good place to store everything. Put your files away in some other location. However, knowing how to reach this folder will sometimes be very useful. If the desktop is full, finding a file from the File Explorer view of the desktop can be easier, because you can right-click in any blank area, and choose to show details, and then sort by the filename or the date.
2. Documents: This is the default location for saving documents. If you don't tell Windows or your application software otherwise, this is where you word processing and spreadsheets will end up. It's usually cluttered, so make folders in it to split things up and categorize it.
3. Downloads: It's the default location when downloading. This will include some documents, frequently PDF files, that you clicked on just to read, and they ended up saved here. This folder needs a good annual cleanup. Get rid of old installation programs for free software (Chrome, Firefox, and so on), as you'll won't need them later--a fresh download is always best.

Sort out the rest, and file them by project, by client, or by year.

4. Music, Pictures, and Videos: Default locations for each of these file types.  
Some scanning software will push all scanned images into the Pictures folder.

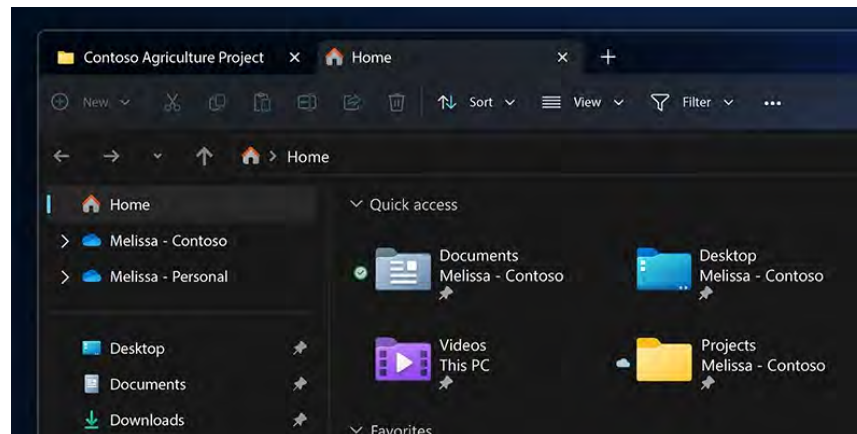
Let's go back to the "This PC" in File Explorer. The next drive letter, D: might be a DVD drive, or it might be a second partition on the main drive. Think of a drive partition as a drawer in a file cabinet. And there may be other drive letters. Drive letters D: and above, but before the DVD drive, are usually partitions.

Drive letters shown immediately after the DVD drive are usually removable drives, either USB flash drives, backup drives, or a drive letter assigned to a card reader in a laptop PC, or sometimes in a printer.

Drive letters from N: and above are generally network drives.

## New File Explorer Features

Windows 10 and 11 have gained 'dark mode' in menus and applications, and File Explorer can use dark mode. Some users like it, some don't. While there is less blinding white space in dark mode, a screen set in dark mode with the brightness set high may still have some white areas that are difficult to read. You can try either, by clicking the Start button, typing 'dark', and choosing 'turn on dark mode for apps'.



Home, Dark Mode, and Tabs in File Explorer

In only the very newest Windows 11, in the 22H2 version (second half of 2022), File Explorer finally gets a tabbed interface. This is slightly tidier than moving between multiple open windows of File Explorer. You can right-click on any folder, and choose 'Open in new tab' from the popup menu. Or press ctrl-T to open a new tab. Or use ctrl-N to open a new window in File Explorer. Those shortcuts work in Chrome and Firefox, too.

Home is an icon now. At the top of the left column, 22H2 Explorer shows a new icon for Home. It's nothing new—it holds the items that are pinned in the left column, so it just gives a larger view of the pinned items. As before, you can drag a folder in to pin it, or right-click for the option to remove a pinned item.

## Upgrade Windows 11 to 22H2 Now?

The 22H2 feature update is behaving reasonably, for the most part, and the installations on computers that meet the official requirements have been routine. For any computer that was manually coaxed into running Windows 11, but does not have the officially-endorsed hardware or processor, future feature updates will require updates from a DVD, done as 'in-place upgrades', and in some cases, that lengthy step won't be enough. So ONLY for the officially-OK Windows 11 systems, yes, go ahead and install 22H2.

With one exception, that is. If you are running either LibreOffice or the old OpenOffice as your office suite, don't upgrade yet. What I'm seeing here is that ANY clipboard use (copy or paste) locks the program. The workaround is to turn off the Windows 'clipboard history' feature. So hold off, or plan to disable clipboard history.



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