How you store your files on your computer is a personal choice to suit your way of working. Even if you don't value your files and don't care if you lose them, you will eventually need to find them to delete them to make room for other stuff. Some files might be precious for all sorts of reasons. Either way, it pays to have a system.

At a recent forum meeting Howard pointed out that any system is OK as long as it works for you. He noted that an internet search could find numerous ideas, but they all boiled down to a few basic routines that can be applied to build your own personal system.

It is important that you stick to the routines you adopt. The power of a good habit is surprisingly great.

Your naming system should be such that a file's name means something to you. "**DSC0000103.jpg**" for a photo file from your camera will not be much use to you in a year or so. To make it more meaningful you might want to use the date and content as the title. Change it to, say, **2012-12-18-uncle-bob-as-clown001.jpg** for example. This uses the date as YYYY-MM-DD so that the files will automatically list in date order; no capital letters are used to avoid confusion if an application is case-sensitive; hyphens are used for the same reason as spaces can occasionally cause problems; the trailing number is used if you want to use several pictures of uncle bob taken in the same session.

As the date is in the filename, it will not be changed if the file is modified or copied onto other drives and naming the subject can avoid head-scratching by later generations.

To ease the task of making back-ups of your important files they could all be stored in one place by telling an application where to put them. Here's where. Microsoft provides a folder named My Documents or Documents. You might like to rename it to make it more personal, such as Dadsdocs, Mumsdocs or Mikesdocs for multiple users. Make some sub-folders for any obvious major divisions you will use such as Office, Work, Picture, Letters, Hobbies. You can, in turn, give these sub-folders for each year (or month, week – even day).

…Start putting all your new data files into these folders. If a folder should develop into a long list of files it can, in turn, be sub-divided further. Break down the list by creating several sub-folders, each dealing with sets of files on related subjects or of the same type and drag and drop the files into folders accordingly. You should soon see how your system is developing.

Once established, stick with it and enjoy the time you will save by not looking for lost files.