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News Journal

Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts

File Types: What are they? And why should we care?

By Phil Sorrentino, President, Sarasota PCUG, Florida
August 2011 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor
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Understanding File Types is the key to successfully organizing and using your computer files and folders. The File Type is the extension to the file name (the characters after the period). Unfortunately, File Types are hidden when you first startup your computer Operating System. I've always thought this was odd because knowing the type of a file can help explain what is going on, or at least what can be done with that particular file. (Because the file type can be changed using the Rename option, I suspect this was done to prevent a user from renaming the file type and possibly making that file un-useable.) Without the file type, confusion can arise. Hiding the file type leads to the appearance that there are multiple files in a folder with the same file name. While actually, the file names are different because they have different file types. It is only the file type that shows them as two distinctly different files. File Types can be shown along with the first part of the file name. In XP and Windows 7, this is accomplished in the View tab of the Control Panel's Folder Options Applet. Just uncheck "Hide extensions for known file types".

Let's start with some very basic File Management concepts. Every file in a folder has to have a unique name. (Two files may have the same name, but they must reside in different folders.) The name has two parts, separated by a period. The part after the period is called the file type or file extension. Typically the file type is three or four characters, but it can be longer. The limit is tied into the overall size of the path of the file in question, but practically you will see file types of around three or four or five characters. If you Google "file types," you will be amazed at how many file types have been defined and you will also see some pretty long file types, like the following 8 character file type, ".debuglog." In these lists you will see all the familiar file types like .doc, .docx, .txt, .rtf, .xls, .jpg, .bmp, .gif, .mp3, .wav, .m3u, .wma, .avi, .mov, .mp4, .wmv, and so on.

A few sentences ago I mentioned "path." The path is a unique description of where the file in question is located. Typically we think of a file's location as being in a particular folder, but the path is more general. The path starts out with the computer followed by the drive, then the folders in hierarchical order, leading down to the particular file. So the path to a picture of a group of cousins taken on July 4th, 2009, might look like: \\Desktop2

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News Journal

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Logo designed on an Atari Stacy Laptop in 1989 by Dwight Johnson Jr.

Lake County Area
Computer Enthusiasts

LCACE
c/o Group Ambassador

"J.J." Johnson

Membership

LCACE membership is open to all individuals and families interested in personal computing. Annual dues are $20.00 per individual/family. Applications for membership may be obtained at the monthly meeting, by request on the club hotline, and are now available on our web site at http://www.lcace.org.

Meetings

LCACE meetings are usually held on Saturdays at the Grayslake Area Public Library, 100 Library Lane, Grayslake, Illinois. The meeting room opens at noon and the formal meeting begins at 12:30 p.m. All meetings are open to the public. Bring a friend!

Newsletter Submissions

Club members are welcome to submit classified ads, reviews, tips and other articles for publication, to our newsletter editor in Microsoft Word format (.doc). **Publication deadline is the 20th of the month for all ads and articles.** Please do not use tabs or special formatting.

Newsletter Advertising

Ad rates per issue: Full page - $25, Half page - $15, Quarter page - $10, Business Card - $5. Discounts are available on advance purchase of multiple issues. Please send camera-ready copy and payment to the club address by the 15th of the month preceding publication. For more information on ad pricing, please call our Hotline. Ads are **FREE** to all paid members.

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Robin's RAMblings

Our 2011 holiday party began with the announcement that LCACE is now an Amazon.com affiliate. This means that if you go to our website, www.lcace.org, and click on the Amazon.com link we will receive a small commission from your purchase. Please ask your family and friends to do this to help our club.

LCACE is also proud to announce that we will have a computer help desk from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. on meeting Saturdays starting on January 7th. This one on one help is open to everyone so invite your family and friends to participate.

Thank you to all our members, family, and friends who attended our holiday party at State Bank of the Lakes. Sandy Mason took over as "elevator operator" when the elevator key briefly went missing. Thanks to J.J. and Dorothy's and Liz' wonderful cooking, we all enjoyed ham and turkey, as well as rolls and pop that the club provided. I don't know how J.J. prepared the turkey and ham and Liz prepared the turkey, but they were outstanding. As always, our LCACE cooks brought great food.

Santa's arrival fascinated children of all ages. We owe a special thank you to member Richard Garling who donates his services with a request for a donation to the Avon Township food pantry. J.J. brought his holiday backdrop again; he photographed and printed pictures of people with Santa. Thank you, Richard and J.J.!

We all enjoyed the music provided by the Jim Jacobs trio (Jim, Mike Maratea and Mike Louie).

Nancy Becker, Roger Busch, Chicago Paul, Jean Anderson, and Cynthia needed small trucks to bring home all their door prizes. In the immortal words of Steve Kostelnik,

"You can't win if you don't buy tickets!"

Gerry Straw won 4th prize, a one year membership to LCACE. Nina Hernandez' took home 3rd prize, an HP laser printer, which was nearly bigger than she was. Membership chair Liz Barnett received 2nd prize, a white iPad2. Harriet Rudnit was the winner of the 17" HP laptop. Harriet is a Mac person; Liz' husband Fred needed a laptop so… they traded. Both Liz and Harriet were very happy (as was Fred with his new laptop).

Nancy Becker and Diane Colosimo, our 50/50 prize winners, each took home $38.

Liz Barnett and Gail Robison did a great job managing our kitchen.
Lester Larkin was really busy unloading cars. The bank is open until one on Saturday so we had to be sure not to park in front.

Linda Busch, Winnie Frost, Bobby Jacobs, and Lester Larkin welcomed everyone and sold 50/50, door prize and raffle tickets.

Liz Barnett did a terrific job organizing the door prize raffle. A special thank you to my adorable raffle helpers, Nina and Hannah Hernandez, Ethan and Carly Seidenberg, and Gerry Straw's grandson, Anthony.

Roger Busch, Lester Larkin, and Lew Seidenberg were hard at work cleaning up the room after the party ended.

A special thank you to our food chair Liz Barnett and Winnie Frost, our party chair, who worked on the party for months.

I won $25 for selling the most tickets and for selling the winning first prize raffle ticket. Just remember next year that you can't win unless you buy or sell tickets.

Visit our club website to view party photos

We have exciting programs scheduled for 2012:

January 7, 2012-Show and tell and ask the gurus

February 11, 2012-Social networking with Richard Garling

March 3, 2012-Staples of Mundelein with the latest in technology

March 31, 2012-Elections, club party, show and tell, ask the gurus

May 5, 2012-

June 2, 2012-

July 14, 2012-Picnic at the Barnetts' house

December 1, 2012-holiday party at State Bank of the Lakes-Save the date!

LCACE has a three step election process. We will take nominations for board positions February 11, March 3, and March 31. We will elect our board at our March 31st meeting, and then choose our president from the people elected to serve on the board. Please start to think of who you would like to nominate. You can nominate yourself.

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Historian Commentary

L.C.A.C.E. Club Historian
History Report, 12/10/11 Party
By Les Larkin
programs@lcace.org

This article will be mercifully short . . . And a little special. I don't think there has ever been a love story in this journal, so I will be breaking new ground. I am not relating the story because of any duress that the huge majority of female board members (6 to 1) may or may not have imposed on me. There was no such duress. But first, some normal historical stuff.

From my all-inclusive vantage point at the back of the room, I could see that everyone was having a great time. And I had the privilege of working with 3 other dedicated board members at the Welcome Table. With me were Winnie, Bobby, and Linda (the red haired Linda). I also had occasional and much needed help from Liz, who was also working in the kitchen.

And here's 4,000 words worth of pictures .

Setting up the food table.

There's no party unless you have some people

And now for the prize action . . .
. . . which wouldn't be possible

without lots of helpers

And now for the very short love story. Several times, Bobby Jacobs tried to get husband Howard to eat while she was handling her Welcome Table responsibilities. And several times, Howard said 'No, I'll wait for you'. Isn't love wonderful?

Roger Busch

Donna Kalinoski

First Prize HP 17” Notebook won by Harriet Rudnit

Second Prize 16GB Apple IPad 2 Wi-Fi Tablet (white) won by Liz Barnett

Third Prize
HP Laserjet P2035
won by
Nina Hernandez

Fourth Prize won by Jerry Straw

(Continued from page 3)

Please remember to use the Amazon.com link on our website for your purchases:

Please click here ► amazon.com ◄ to help support our club with your on-line purchases

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season. May 2012 bring you good health, happiness, and peace!

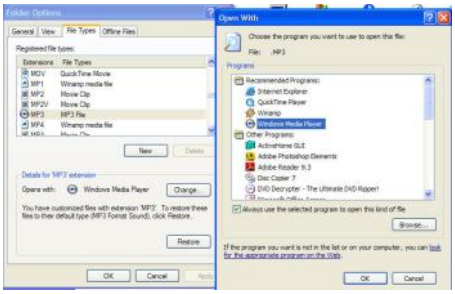
(Continued from page 1)

\D:Photos\Family\2009 \FourthOfJulyPicnic\Cousins.jpg where "Cousins.jpg" is a picture (or at least a .jpg file) in the "FourthOfJulyPicnic" folder, which is in the "2009" folder, which is in the "Family" folder, which is in the "Photos" folder on the "D:" drive of the "Desktop2" computer. (Note that the "\" is used to separate components of the path. Similar to the way "/" is used to separate the components of an address on the internet.) So you see the path to every file must be unique, so that the file can be unambiguously found. This also explains why we can have two files, with the same name and extension, exist in different folders. The path would be different, not by the file name and extension, but by one of the folder components. So, when all is said and done, the file type is part of a file's name that makes that file unique.

But that is only part of the story. The file type is really a definition of all of the data that is held within the file. (It defines in great detail just what every bit and byte in the file means.) And this is where Files and Applications come together, or where they become "associated". File Association links a file type with an Application. An Application knows how to handle a particular file type because of the file type definition. Fortunately, we, the users, don't have to know anything about the details of the file type, only that a particular file type can be used with a particular Application. So if a correct association is made, the Application will handle the file in the expected fashion. If an incorrect association is made, the results will be undetermined.

Many applications can handle many different file types. For example, Windows Media Player can use a whole host of audio and video file types, such as wma, mp3, m3u, aiff, wmv, avi, mpg, mpeg, mpv2. Sometimes when you install a new application, the application will automatically associate with the file types that it knows how to use. This may not be the associations that you originally wanted. Some Applications are much more polite, and ask if you want them to associate with certain file types. If associations happen automatically, you can end up with different applications being used to handle a particular file type. For example, you could end up with "Real Player" playing your music that you originally had Windows Media Player associated with.

The Operating System provides a capability to review and establish the associations. Each operating System is a little different. In XP it is provided in the File Types tab of the Folder Options, Control Panel, as shown in the graphic example that follows. (The example shows the .mp3 file type chosen for a change (on the left) and the Recommended and Other Programs (Applications) selections (on the right.) In Windows 7 (and Vista) it is part of the Default Files Control Panel (Associate a file type or protocol with a program).



Associations can easily be changed, but be very careful. Only use the Recommended Programs. If another program is used, the results may be undetermined and may even damage the file in question. But this is the way you can get things back to the way you want. You can get your music back to being played by your player of choice, or your videos back to being played by Windows Media Player, or your .bmp graphics files back to being displayed with the Paint application.

So, we care about File Types because they help to uniquely define a file's name and location, and their definitions enable applications to determine how to handle the contents of the file. These are two very big jobs for a seemingly very small (and often hidden) aspect of the Windows Operating System.

LCACE's Help Desk

Do you have computer questions or need help with your computer?
Visit the Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts' help desk for one on one help 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. at the Grayslake Area Public Library, 100 Library Lane, Grayslake, on Saturday, January 7, Saturday, February 11, Saturday, March 3, Saturday, March 31, Saturday, May 5, Saturday, June 2.

This free service is open to anyone with an interest in computers so invite your family, friends, and neighbors.

Buy from Amazon and help our club

LCACE is now an Amazon.com affiliate. If you are going to purchase from Amazon.com, please go to our website, www.lcace.org, and click on the Amazon.com link. We will receive a small commission from your purchase. Please ask your family and friends to do this to help our club.

Amazon.com sells more than just books and technology products. You name it; they sell it.

DO YOU "YOUTUBE"?

By Elaine Szaniszlo, Editor, Northeast Ohio PC Club
December 2011 issue, Nybbles & Bytes
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I had always thought that YouTube was a site that had lots of fun videos. Well, it does, but read on!

I was on a trip recently and the fuses blew on the car power outlets. We needed to replace the fuses as our plug-in GPS would not work otherwise. Of course, everyone knows the fuse box is located under the dashboard, right? But did you know some cars have another fuse box under the hood? We found that out on youtube.com. We typed in the car make, model and year, and fuse box, and up came a very nice video showing where the fuses were in the engine compartment, how to get the cover off and showed there was a fuse puller included (a very useful tool, indeed!). Now we would never have known that.

A friend told me he was going to replace a garbage disposal. He went to YouTube. Again, there was a detailed video explaining how to do that. Other ambitious folks I know have used YouTube to get videos on repairing clothes washers, too.

I used YouTube once to get some cooking information, but never realized the wide scope of informative videos that was available. So the next time you want to solve a problem or get information on any do-it-yourself project, check out YouTube. It may make YOU happier.

Here's list of holiday party prize winners.

Sorry the names aren't complete

Cordless phone Chicago Paul
Photo probe Nancy Becker
Paper Phil Nocerino
Norton 2012 Dorothy Sutherland
Blue tooth headset Jack Frost
Movie Easy HD Richard Eisenmann
Keyboard drawer ?
4 GB flash drive Bob Berry
Photo Paper Nancy Becker
Internet Security Roger Busch
Flip cover calculator Jean Anderson
Photo Paper Linda Busch
Logitech mouse Sherry Florian
Video Double Indemnity Leslie Salzberg
Norton Anti Virus 2011 Tracy Berry
Relay Flash Drive Roger Busch
Bluetooth headset man in black glasses
Mouse pad Jerry Straw
Calculator Lew Seidenberg
Photo paper Dorothy Sutherland
4th prize LCACE membership Jerry Straw
$5 unknown boy
Brother Fax Nancy Becker
Photo Paper Anita Hernandez
Photo Paper Chicago Paul
Staples paper Anthony
Flash drive Henry Henriksen
Wireless mouse Roger Busch
Photo paper Beth
Fax Machine Dorothy Sutherland
Wireless mouse Nancy Becker
Photo paper ?
Calculator Jean Anderson
Photo Paper Chicago Paul
$5 Linda Busch
* 50/50 $38 Nancy Becker
Flash drive man
Photo paper Fred Barnett
Cordless mouse ?
Anti Virus 2012 Betsy Alleman
3rd prize HP Printer Nina Hernandez
Photo paper Winnie Frost
Keyboard drawer Leslie Salzburg
Flash drive Nancy Becker
Print Artist Fred Barnett
Photo paper Jacob
Cordless mouse Dorothy Sutherland
$10 boy
Fax Machine Cynthia
Photo Paper Donna Kalinoski
Flash Drive Jean Anderson
* 50/50 $38 Diane Colosimo
Photo paper
Copy paper Chicago Paul
Anti Virus 2012 girl
2nd prize I Pad 2 Liz Barnett
Keyboard drawer Jean Anderson
Photo paper Chicago Paul
Cordless mouse man with glasses
Photo Paper Nancy Becker
Photo Paper Chicago Paul
Calculator Leslie Salzburg
Flash Drive Sandy Mason
Fax Machine Sherry Florian
Trrend Micro Jean Anderson
Photo paper Nancy Becker
Mouse ?
Mouse Richard Eisenmann
Photo Paper Chicago Paul
Headset ?
Flash drive Phil Nocerino
Tether smartphone Jack Frost
Photo paper Roger Busch
Norton 2011 ?
1st prize Laptop Harriet Rudnit
Works 9.0 Chicago Paul
$10 Nancy Becker

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Saturday, May 5	Saturday, June 2

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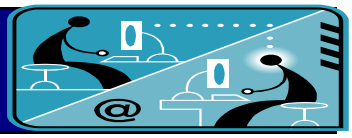

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http://lcace.org/PhotoAlbums.htm

Next Meeting

Saturday

January 7, 2012

Meeting Agenda: http://lcace.org/agendas.htm

Meeting Agenda

Show & Tell

Ask the Gurus

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