

Guidelines on naming documents in a “long filenames” environment

As with all types of filing system, whether manual or electronic, without a proper set of guidelines the ability to use long filenames when naming documents can lead to filing systems that are just as anarchic and impossible to use as the old **DOS** filing systems where the restriction on filenames to 8 characters used to eventually lead to meaningless names (e.g. arbpred.doc, or 00000031.doc, etc...).

For instance is the list on the left any better than the one on the right ?

3 rd book launch - please come.doc	invjus01.doc
Invitation to launch of third book.doc	invape01.doc
Invitation to the launch of Martin's third book.doc	invamc01.doc
Letter of thanks for the marvellous d.....doc	thank03.doc
Please come to launch of third book on 11-8-1999.doc	invbpc01.doc
Thank you for the dinner at the Olympiadoc	thank01.doc
We invite you to the launch of Martin's third book.doc	invbvt01.doc
We would like to invite you to the third book launch.doc	invapc01.doc
Would you attend the launch of Martin's third book.doc	invbpt01.doc

Can you tell in the list on the left which invitation letter was written to **Alistair P. Cartwright** ? Exactly ! No! Given that most of those invitation letters would have been written on the same day, you would not even be able to use the document's creating date as a help. Instead you would potentially have to open every single one of the above invitation letters before being able to find the one to Alistair P. Cartwright.

So much for long filenames

Naming suggestions for Permanent Reference documents

Permanent Reference are documents that you are likely to keep forever, whether in their original finalised format, or whether in amended form, for specific users to reference. Typical such documents would include Help Desk documents, Contractual documents, Company Rules, Legal documents, etc....

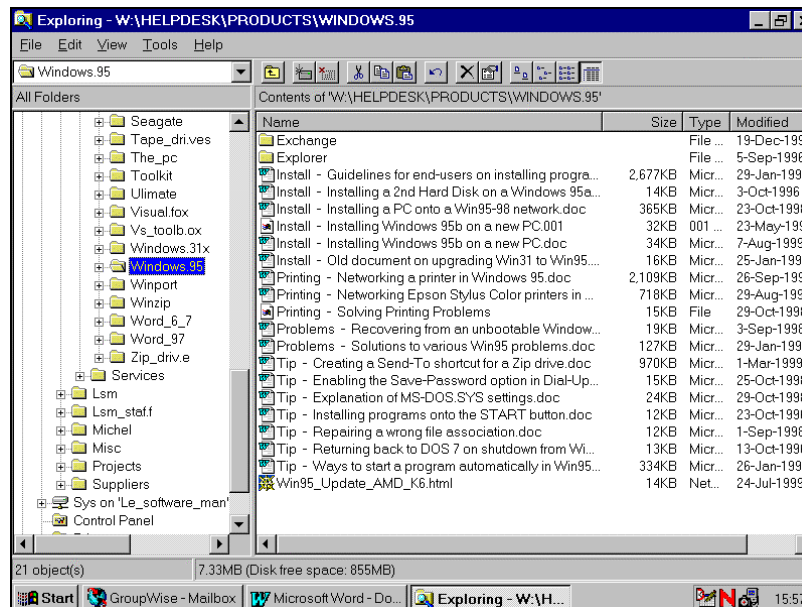
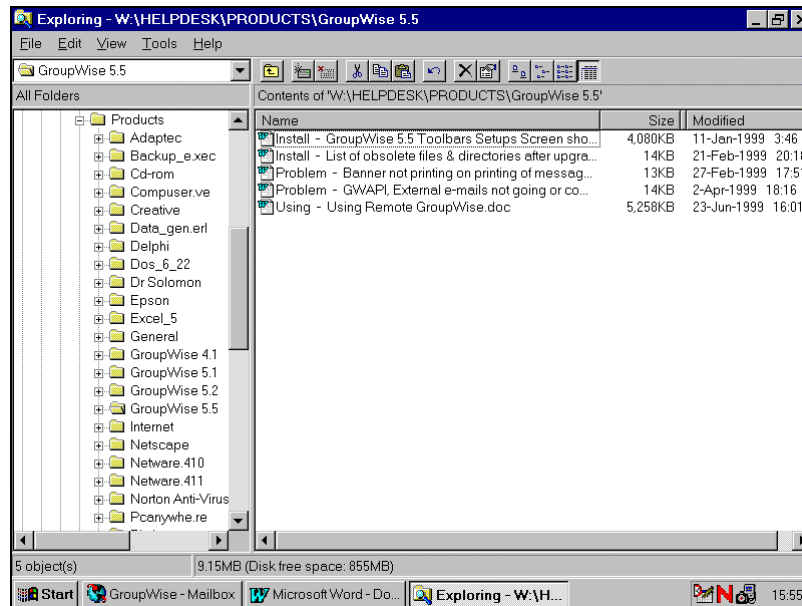
The two most important criteria for locating such documents are in most companies :

- The **general topic** of the document
- A **short description** of what the document is about.

To that end, therefore, we suggest a naming scheme that matches exactly the above criteria, as follows :

<Topic_Name> – <Short Description>.doc

For better legibility we suggest two spaces each side of the separating hyphen, however that is a matter of preference. See below for two examples of such a naming scheme taken directly from the **Help Desk** directory at AnswersThatWork :



Naming suggestions for Customer / Client / Supplier Folders

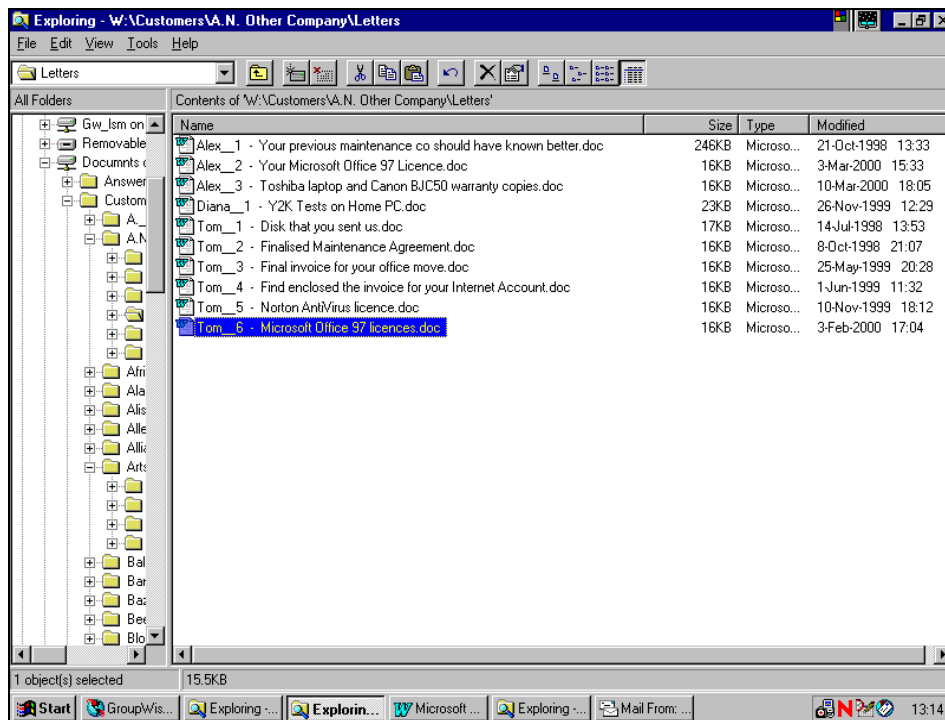
In such directories/folders the most important points of reference are, in most organisations, in order of importance :

- **Who** the document was addressed to.
- The **chronological order** in which the documents were created.
- A **short description** of what the document is about.

To that end, therefore, we suggest a naming scheme that matches exactly the above criteria, as follows :

<Person>__<number> - <Short Description>.doc

For better legibility we suggest two spaces each side of the separating hyphen, two underscores before a single-digit number, and one underscore before a double-digit number (vital to ensure that your documents stay in chronological order). See below an example of such a naming scheme taken directly from the **Customers** folder at AnswersThatWork :



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