

California Computer Care

News,
Views,
Tips and
Cool Techniques
for CCC Members

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We
speak
Geek,
so you
don't
have to.

Where's my stuff?

I lose stuff around the house all of the time. If it weren't for Laurie, I'd never find anything. But, I never lose anything in my Macs as I let them do all of the hard work.

Mac OS X has a mania for security! Because of this Mac OS X wants to keep your stuff all in one, safe place: your *Home* folder.

Open your Mac's hard drive and then open the folder named *Users*. Inside you'll see a folder that looks like a little house. That is your *Home* folder. I'll bet that it is even named after you.

Opening your *Home* folder, you see several themed folders. If you use these themed folders (you don't have to if you don't want to), your stuff will be much easier to keep track of and *back up!* You can also create as many of your own themed folders as you like and keep them in your *Home* folder.

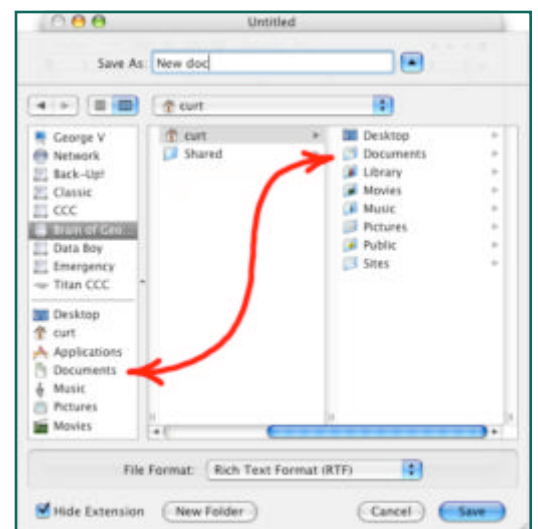
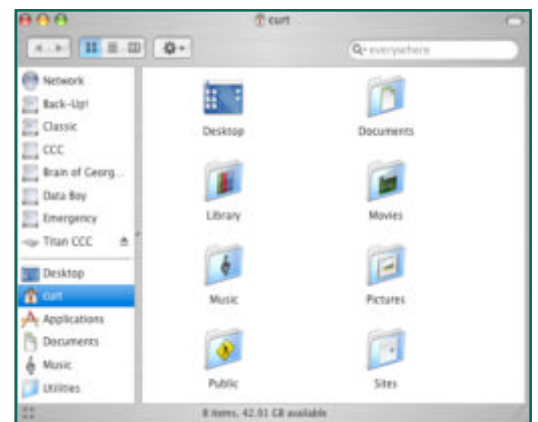
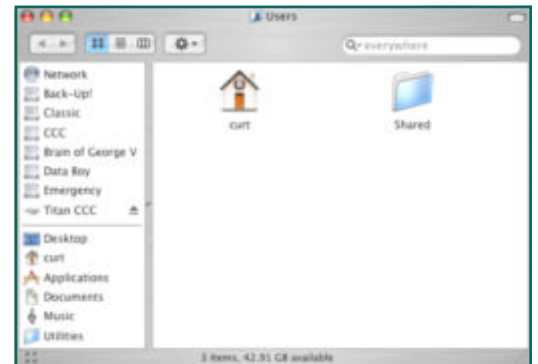
Notice also, that when you go to save a document, many of those themed folders show up in the Save sheet's sidebar for easy access. You can also change the folders that appear in the sidebar whenever you like.

The Desktop folder. It's a bit odd, but the Desktop folder, in your *Home* folder, actually contains all of the stuff you've left loose on your Desktop. So that disorganized desktop mess is actually organized after all and conveniently stored in your *Home* folder.

The Music folder. *iTunes* stores your music here automatically. If you have music files from the internet, friends or your own compositions (that's what *GarageBand* is for); store them here where it's memorable.

The Pictures folder. *iPhoto* puts its pictures in here. You can wisely, store other pictures and drawings here, too.

The Movies folder. Ditto for *iMovie*. *QuickTime* movie files can be kept in here as well.



The Library folder. This folder is special and reserved for Mac OS to use. Don't put any of your stuff in here.

The Public and Sites folders. These are for sharing with the outside world. Useful if you are on a network or if your Mac is used by several users. Most of us never use them, but they could be handy someday.

The **Documents folder**. This is the biggie. The Documents folder is where you should keep all of your documents that don't have homes elsewhere in the themed folders.

Many applications put folders into the Documents folder automatically. You may see folders from Microsoft, Acrobat or AppleWorks. These folders contain your preferences, email, registration information and the like. Don't delete them.

I recommend that you use your Documents folder creatively. Make folders inside to organize your work. Maybe a folder for household finances, hobbies, correspondence, school papers and so on. By doing so, you will help to organize your documents and make them far easier to keep track of.

Stay organized. Once you have set up your themes and folders; use them. Be consistent. When you save a new document, take the necessary moments and save them to the correct location. If you do nothing else, at least save them temporarily to the Desktop so that they will be safely in your *Home* folder. No matter how you organize things, please **DO NOT** store documents in application folders; that is the easiest way to lose them forever!

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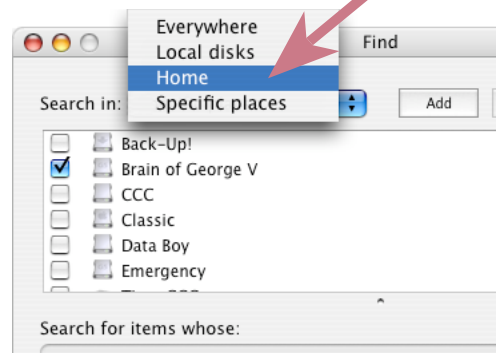
Santa Rosa, CA 95405

(800) 540-8989

Like an
auto club
for your
computer.

The **BIG advantages**. If you have been consistent and always store your documents and data files in your *Home* folder, you can take advantage of two very important capabilities.

ONE. You know where everything is. No hunting around all over your hard drive, just look in your *Home* folder. If you need to use the *Find* command, restrict it to looking in your *Home* folder and you'll save lots of time and avoid false positives.



TWO. *Back up.* Nothing is more important. Really. Please make your back up copies! If you have consistently placed your documents and data files in your *Home* folder, then that is all that you need to back up. You don't need to laboriously search out your files; they're all right there. Just copy your *Home* folder to a CD, DVD, ZIP disk, external hard drive or server to make safe back up copies of your precious files.

April Tip —

Software Update is NOT your friend! While its heart is in the right place, *Software Update* is a source of very real concern. In the rush to fix problems or add attractive new features, many bugs and errors creep into new software releases. *Software Update* allows these new, buggy versions to be instantly available to everyone. In the past, the leading edge geeks got the new software first. These are the people best equipped to deal with the technical chaos that results. Now, everybody gets bug bitten by innocently following what appear to be benign instructions required by Apple.

This is not malicious. The problem is that computers are like us. Each Mac is unique because it has different software and add-on hardware (printers, scanners, Palms, etc.). So, each behaves differently. Apple can't test their software on every possible combination (though I wish that they were more thorough). What are we to do?

You have two choices:

- 1) **Ignore it.** When *Software Update* nags you, just *Quit* it and ignore its messages. Don't worry, if something really important comes up, I'll warn you about it and make sure that you are updated.
- 2) **Prevent it.** You can stop *Software Update* from nagging by opening its System Preference (Mac OS X) or Control Panel (Mac OS 9) and unchecking the box next to: *Automatically check for updates when you have a network connection* (Mac OS X) or *Update software automatically* (Mac OS 9). Once done, *Software Update* will nag you no more.