



EASY'S Guide To ... Working with Floppy Disks

Introduction

The aim of this guide is to help you overcome some of the problems that people face when saving work, opening it later, and what to do when its not where it should be. Depending on where you've directed it, the information will either be on the hard disk inside that specific PC, or on your own floppy disk or on the network.

As they are the most used packages, the guide will focus on the standard ways of saving and opening files as found in Microsoft Word (word processor) and Microsoft Excel (spreadsheet) – though you will find that this is a fairly standard approach.

Terminology

Hard disk: this is stored inside the computer. If you store your work here, anyone can delete it.

Floppy disk: allows you to store information and move it between computers.

Magnetic storage: both type of disks use magnetic fluctuations to store information (in much the same way that audio cassettes do). For this reason, always take care to look after your disks.

Byte: unit of measurement. Each byte is equivalent to one character (letter, number, space, etc)

Kilobyte (K or Kb): 1024 bytes. A floppy disk has a limit of 1440K.

Megabyte (Mb): 1 million bytes. A hard disk has upwards of 500Mb storage space.

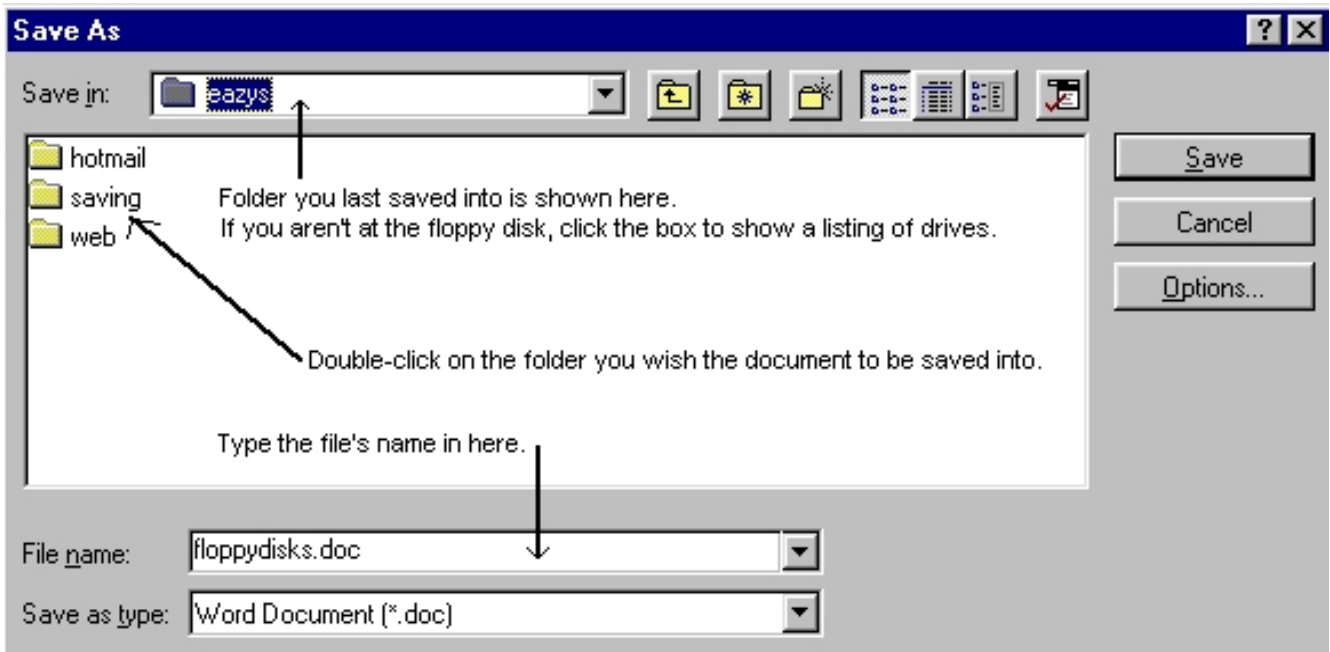
Floppy Disk Drive: the box in the computer that reads from and writes to floppy disk. It has a slot for the insertion of the disk, an eject button, and a light that shows when the drive is reading or writing information to the disk.

Drive Letters: to simplify matters (honest!) each type of drive is given a code-letter. The floppy disk drive is the A drive, the hard disk drive is the C drive, etc.

Saving New Documents

It is important to save new documents to reduce the risk of losing your work.

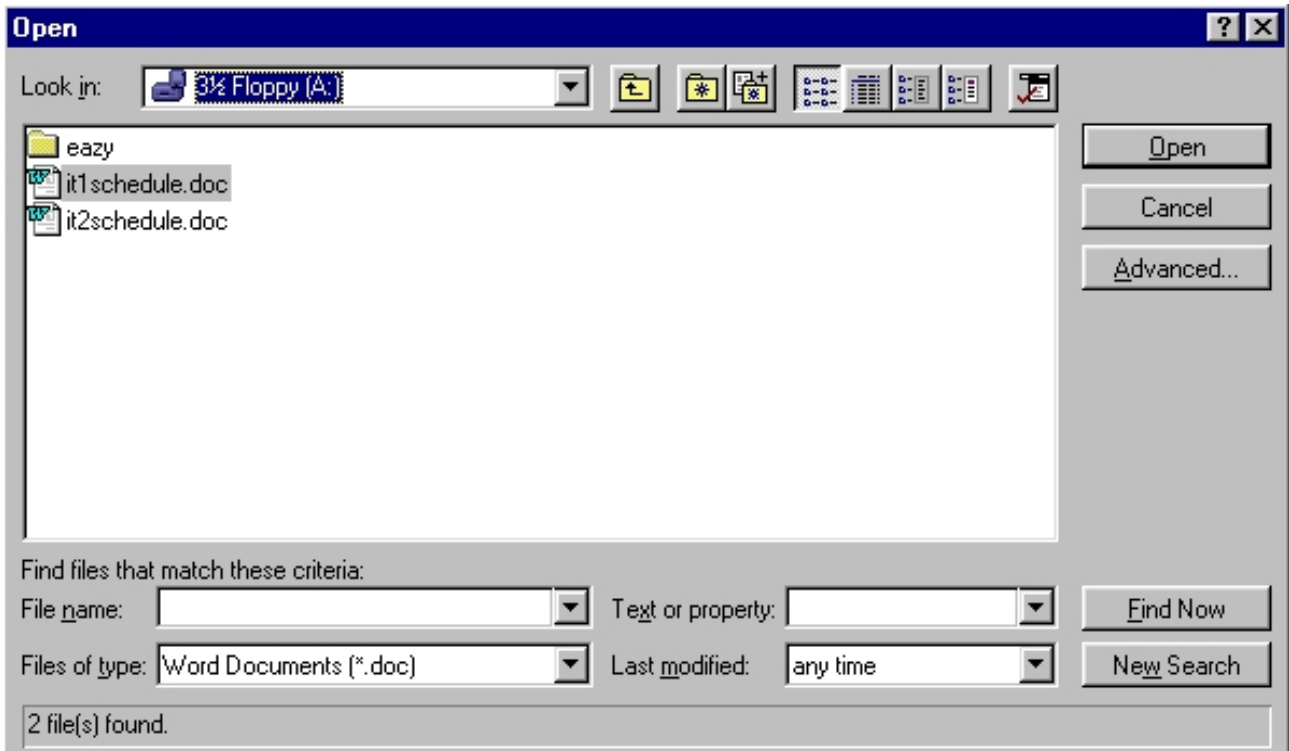
1. Click on **File** then **Save As...** this will open up a *dialogue box* similar to the one pictured below.



2. Click on the box to the right of **Save in** to see a list of drives you can store information in. You will also see which main folder and subfolder your file will be saved in.
3. To change the drive or folder, click on one from the list. You will see that the main box changes, showing you the list of folders available in that drive or subfolders in the main folder.
4. When you are happy that you are in the right place, type in the correct file name in the box to the right of **File name**:
5. All correct? Then click on the **Save** button. If you have told the computer to save your work to the floppy disk, then the floppy disk drive's light will come on.

Opening Saved Documents

1. Your saved documents are opened by clicking on **File** then **Open...** this will open up a *dialogue box* similar to the one pictured below.
2. The dialogue box is similar to the 'save' one, and the procedure is the same. Clicking in the Look in: box brings up a list of drives and folders. Click on the relevant ones to find your files (in this case, the **3½ Floppy[A:]**). This is why it is important to properly file your documents - it makes them easier to find.



Handy Icons



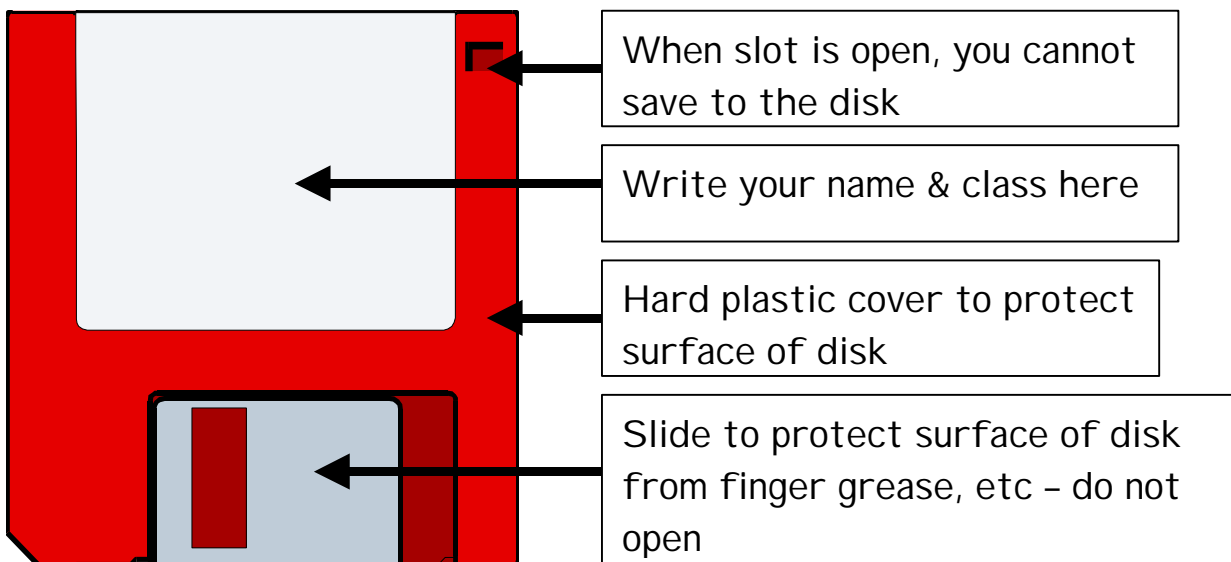
1. Once you've told the computer the file's name, and where it is stored, you can just click on the Save icon on the toolbar (pictured above). Use this icon to quickly save your work; clicking this button every five minutes can save a lot of re-typing.



2. Instead of clicking on File then Open, just click on the Open icon (pictured above).

Common Problems

1. Many beginners save their work in the wrong place, usually on the hard drive. If your work isn't on your floppy disk, it may be on the hard drive of the computer you were last working on; if so, it is probably in the folder called *My Documents* (this is the default setting in Microsoft programs).
2. Lost disks. Happens all the time...you're in a rush for the bus, and forgot to take your disk out of the computer. **ALWAYS WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE LABEL.**
3. Damaged disks. Disks are cheap and disposable - but your work isn't. Take care of them. Put them in a proper container to save them from knocks. If you can keep a second copy of them, then do.



The Next Time

Windows Explorer allows you to manage your files, so that you can properly order them. The analogy is of an office where you have different filing cabinets and drawers, in each drawer is a folder, and the folders hold information on a similar topic. Thus, you could divide your work into subjects, then subjects into learning outcomes and assessments; enabling you to quickly find files without having to think of descriptive file names.

Have a look at the NETg package "Windows 95 Beginners", specifically Unit 3 "Microsoft Explorer".