Inside Microsoft WINDOWS 95

in this issue

Configuring My Computer for a cleaner desktop

As you know, My Computer provides you with easy access to all the files on your hard disk. You simply launch My Computer, double-click a drive icon, and then successively double-click folder icons until you get to the folder containing the files or programs you need to work with. However, in its default configuration, My Computer can leave your desktop a mess if the files or programs you want to access are nested several layers deep. This is because each time you open a new folder, My Computer opens a new window.
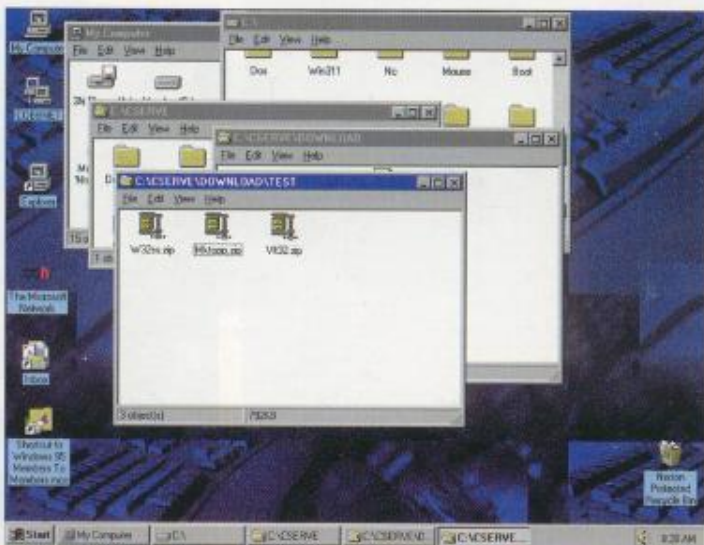
In this article, we'll look at a situation where this could be a problem. Then we'll show you how to configure My Computer to work more efficiently.

Using My Computer

My Computer is probably the easiest way to navigate through Windows 95. When you launch My Computer, you'll see a window with icons that looks very similar to the program group in Program Manager. However, My Computer works more like File Manager by providing you with access to all the folders and files on your hard disk.

As we mentioned, each time you open a new folder, My Computer opens a new window. While this can be useful in some situations, such as when you want to drag files

FIGURE A

In its default configuration, My Computer opens a separate window for each folder you open.

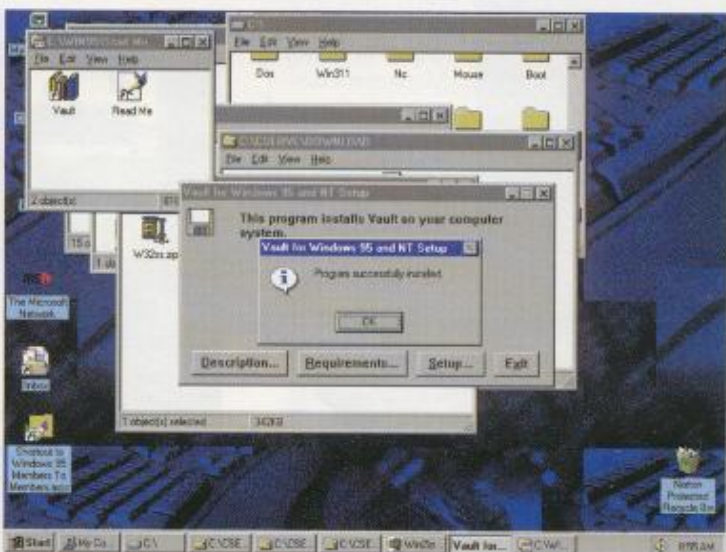from one folder to another, it can leave your desktop a mess and make it a confusing place in which to work.

For example, suppose you want to access several ZIP files you recently downloaded from CompuServe. You placed these ZIP files in a folder called TEST, which is nested in the folder DOWNLOAD, which in turn is nested in the folder CSERVE. While that may not sound too bad, the CSERVE folder is nested in the C:\ folder, which is nested in My Computer. Therefore, by the time you access the TEST folder, you've opened five windows on the desktop, as shown in Figure A on page 1.

Having many windows open on the desktop won't hurt Windows 95's performance. However, it can make the desktop a confusing place to work—not to mention the frustration of having to close all the open windows once you've finished working with the files.

For instance, suppose you're using the 32-bit version of WinZip, and you've used the extract and install feature to extract and set up the shareware program Vault for Windows 95 and NT. When WinZip finishes, you'll have six windows and two dialog boxes open on your desktop, as shown in Figure B.

Now, to clean up, you have to click the OK and Exit buttons in the two Vault for Windows 95 and NT Setup dialog boxes, then close the Vault folder, the TEST folder, the DOWNLOAD folder, the CSERVE folder, the C:\ folder, and finally My Computer. As you can imagine, this can be frustrating.

FIGURE B

Your desktop can quickly become a confusing place to work.

Configuring My Computer to use a single window

You can avoid all the open windows on your desktop by configuring My Computer to use a single window for each folder that you open. To do so, open My Computer, pull down the View menu, and select the Options... command. When you do, you'll see the Options dialog box, as shown in Figure C.

As you can see in the Folder page, My Computer is configured with the Browse folders using a separate window for each folder option. To configure My Computer to use a single window for each folder that you open, select the Browse folders by using a single window that changes as you open each folder radio button. Now, click the Apply button to enable your changes and then click OK to close the Options dialog box.
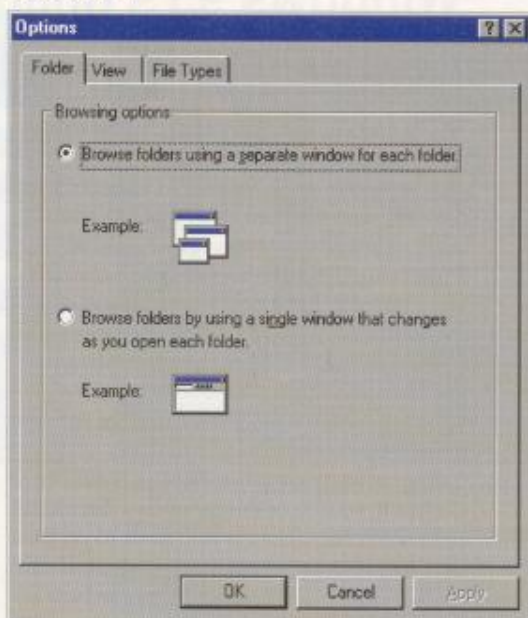
Once you enable the Browse folders by using a single window that changes as you open each folder option, each time you open a folder in My Computer, the window for that folder replaces the previous window. However, you'll probably want to be able to return to the previous window. In order to do so, click the Up One Level button (🗗) on the toolbar. (Since My Computer's toolbar is disabled by default, you'll need to activate it. To do so, pull down the View menu and select the Toolbar option.)

Now when you access the ZIP files in the TEST folder, you'll have only one window open on the desktop, as shown in Figure D. To access the DOWNLOAD folder, you simply click the Up One Level button.
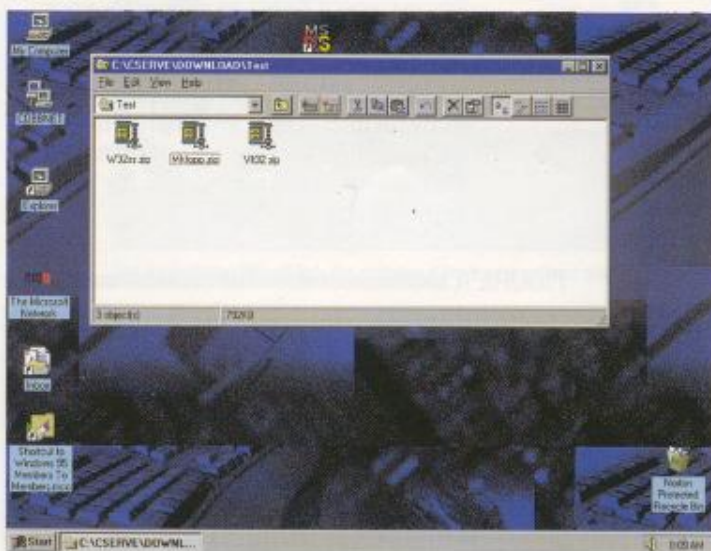
Conclusion

By default, My Computer opens a new window for each folder you open. This can make working in Windows 95 messy and confusing. In this article, we've shown you how to configure My Computer to use a single window for each folder you open. We've also shown you how to activate the toolbar and use the Up One Level button to navigate through nested folders. 🏁

FIGURE C

You use the Options dialog box to make My Computer use a single window for each folder you open.

FIGURE D

Having only one window open on the desktop makes navigating with My Computer much cleaner.