The Bridges Guide To An Organized School Year!

Because maybe having hundreds of files on your desktop and all your work in your downloads folder isn't the *best* way to approach school.

Author(s): Chiddhanya Alagesan

The beginning of the school year is very similar to the calm before the storm. And with the said storm comes the seemingly inevitable feeling of drowning in your schoolwork. A good solution to this problem is to keep track of your work and staying organized. So without further ado, here are some ways you can stay organized during the school year!

NAME YOUR FILES PROPERLY

Searching for a specific file can become a painful process when you have been looking for it amongst a sea of similarly named files. Having to open and read several files individually can be a colossal waste of time. To prevent this, ensure that you name your files specifically, and with key identifiers, such as course code and the type of file (lecture notes, assignment, etc.). Also, ensure that the name isn't too long so that it doesn't get cut off!

ORGANIZE WITH FOLDERS

This one is quite obvious, but saving your work in separate folders can save you plenty of time. Although the number of files won't decrease, saving your files in different folders can help you locate a specific document and see everything you have. Especially with school being online, creating a system of folders is a great way to keep track of all your files. We recommend having a folder within a folder system (or nesting folders) like the following:

[year+semester] > [course code] > [type (e.g. syllabus, lab reports, essays, ppts)]

EXTERNAL STORAGE DEVICES

Using external storage devices can help you organize your data, be it personal or school-related, even further. Post-secondary education can often require a lot of storage space, whether for textbooks, assignments, or projects. Using hard drives or USBs for storage can prevent you from running out of space. Additionally, keeping your information on an external device can ensure that your files are safe in the event that your laptop is damaged or misplaced, and can prevent the stress of your files being compromised.

USING WEBSITE BLOCKERS

It seems like there are endless social media and entertainment platforms nowadays. Although it is perfectly okay to explore these websites and apps when you're taking a break,

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doing so while you are studying can have disastrous results. An excellent way to prevent you from getting distracted is to use a website blocker! There are plenty of browser extensions available for this reason, such as 'Cold Turkey Blocker'. You can also download similar apps on your phone to remove potential distractions and get work done!

USE YOUR NOTES APP
Use the 'Sticky Notes' (Windows) or 'Notes' (Apple) app on your desktop to keep track of deadlines and to-do lists. This is a great way to keep yourself on track because all the information you need to know will be available to you as soon as you open your computer. You can also use the notes app on your phone, but we find that this may be a better way to keep track of dates because most people do their work on their computers.

USE ORGANIZATIONAL APPS
There are plenty of apps on the market that promise that they will help you get your life together and stay organized. While most of these apps can be a hit or miss depending on your personality and the way you work, some apps can be universally helpful. We recommend using apps like Google Calendars, Notion, and Asana to keep yourself on track. It is important to remember that the task falls on you to complete at the end of the day, but these apps can aid you in the process!

KEEP YOUR DESKTOP MINIMAL
Having a desktop filled with folders and files is inefficient and stressful. Having a cleaner and uncluttered desktop can help you locate your stuff quickly and save you a lot of time. Reduce the number of files you have on your desktop by nesting your folders and prioritizing the files you *need* on your desktop. If it is a less important file, you can always search for it with your search bar or finder!

BOOKMARK YOUR FREQUENTLY VISITED SITES
You will most likely need to visit sites such as your course pages, email, and student resources repeatedly throughout your school semester. A good way to save time and remind yourself to check these sites is to bookmark them to your browser. Like your files, sometimes your bookmarks can get cluttered too, so if you find that you have too many, you can also sort your bookmarks into folders like 'courses' or 'social media'!

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