1.5 Organizing files

In some consulting settings in a given year you may deal with many clients, several projects per client, and several visitations to each project. You need a way of keeping track of emails, datasets, meeting notes, etc. so that you can find them months or years later. This takes time so you need to allocate some time for it. I probably spend at least 10% of my time trying to stay organized.

a. **Computer**

I have a folder called Gary, with subfolders for each group I work with (e.g. Biometrics, Nutrition, VA). Inside each of those I have folders for each project or investigator name, and inside those folders for specific projects. Inside each specific project folder I have dated folders for each time I work on the project. I use names like "2004-11-15" so that they are sorted by time and the most recent are always the last. So for example a typical folder might be

Gary/Nutrition/Michael/Zinc paper/2004-11-15

Inside that folder I put datasets, documents I create, etc. as well as copies of important emails from or to the investigator (usually in notepad files). I try to name documents with project, date, etc.

b. **Paper**

I continually try to keep more on my computer, but in some cases such as handwritten meeting notes or handwritten calculations I do keep folders labeled by the investigator's name, project, and date.