File Explorer – Files, Folders and Beyond!
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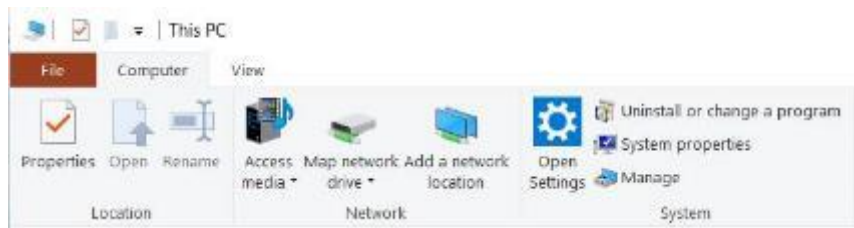Philsorr (at) yahoo.com

File Explorer is an integral part of Windows 10. You might have even heard that it is the "Keys to the Kingdom." File Explorer, as you probably know, provides the ability to work with, and manipulate, the Files and Folders on your computer Files are the basic elements that we collect and use Folders are the infrastructure that we create to allow us to manage the store house of knowledge that is in the collection of files So with File Explorer you can create new folders to organize your data. You can Move or Copy files and/or folders to new locations. You can even examine the properties of a file or folder And File Explorer is the component of the Operating System that provides a Graphical Interface so we don't have to remember any arcane commands for a command line interface These basic features have been available as long as File Explorer has been part of the Windows Operating System (circa the hazy past when Windows 95 was new).

A File Explorer window provides a lot of information about your computer There are three main areas of interest in the window, the (context sensitive) Ribbon, the Navigation pane, and the Contents pane (Yes, I know you can add a third pane to the right of the Contents pane which then provides further information about the item selected in the Contents pane, but that's just icing on the cake.) The Ribbon provides the set of tools that can be used, based on the selection in the Navigation pane and the Tab (above the ribbon) selected The Navigation and Contents panes are below the ribbon, Navigation on the left, and Contents on the right These two panes allow you to review and modify the collection of files and folders on your computer When you highlight an item in the navigation pane, the contents thereof are shown in the contents pane This allow you to easily move or copy items using "Drag and Drop", always moving items from the right (Contents pane) to the left (Navigation pane) Of course you can also use the keyboard commands for Cut (Ctrl-X), Copy (Ctrl-C), and Paste (Ctrl-V) to accomplish the same move or copy.

When you first open a File Explorer window, it will be focused on the Quick Access area by default (unless you have attended the File Explorer class and have made the suggested change to focus on "This PC." This can be done by selecting the View Tab and then clicking on the "Options" button, choosing "change folder and search options, and finally selecting "This PC" in the popup window). Focusing on Quick Access doesn't provide many new features, but if you change the focus to "This PC," either manually by clicking on "This PC,' or making the change described above, you will have the ability to get to some useful areas.

Here are the controls you will have available when you focus on "This PC" It is probably obvious that "This PC" is your computer, whereas, Quick Access is quite different. Quick Access is an automatically populated list of recently accessed files

and frequently accessed folders, which will probably change automatically, over time. (This may lead to confusion if you get used to using Quick Access because of the fact that its contents may change without your provocation or knowledge.)

The first item that is available on the ribbon is "Properties." Click it and you will see information about your computer's Hardware and Software. Yes, this is the Control Panel's System page, but now it is easily available whenever you have a File Explorer window open. Next on the Ribbon are Network features. If you have a home network of computers this can be helpful, if you don't have a network move on to the System group. Here you can immediately get into Settings by clicking on "Open Settings" (this is probably not terribly valuable because Settings can easily be accessed via the Start button which is always available on the Taskbar). The next item in the System group may be more useful; it is "Uninstall or change a program." This is a quick way to get to the App option in Settings. Here you will see a list of all of the Programs (Applications) installed on your computer. This is where you can Uninstall a program or possibly modify its operation. The next item, "System Properties" is another choice from Settings; the "System-About" screen This screen shows the Hardware (Device Specifications), gives you the ability to "Rename this PC," and provides a summary of the Security features being employed by Windows, such as "Virus & Threat Protection" and "Firewall & Network Protection." Clicking "See details in Windows Security" immediately gets you to the Windows Security page in Settings.

The last item in the system group is Manage. This provides entry to "System tools," "Storage," and "Services and Applications." I know you can get there via the Control Panel by selecting "Administrative Tools," and finally selecting "Computer Management," but this is a much easier way to get to these areas. System Tools includes a few useful tools like a Task Scheduler and Performance monitoring tools. Storage provides "Disk Management" which allows you to look deeply into your hard drive partitions. This is a place you may only want to view, and not try to change anything unless you have very good directions and the phone number of someone who can get you out of any trouble, should you get into trouble. The last area is "Services and Applications" which provides a view into the "Services" that are part of Windows 10. Services are software programs that are part of your system. The Services view shows you all the many Services and whether they are running or not. This view allows you to change how some of the services are started and how they run. This area should mostly be considered Off Limits, again unless you have very good directions for a particular change. (And you may someday find yourself in

this area if you're trying to troubleshoot a strange problem, but most of this should be left to someone with a lot of "under the hood" experience.)

All of the tools mentioned so far are available because "This PC" has been selected in the Navigation pane, and the "Computer" Tab was selected. (Remember that the ribbon is context sensitive; meaning that, based on the selection in the Navigation pane and the Tab selected, certain tools will be available on the ribbon). So, there are other tools that are specifically for use with your disk drive that become available on the ribbon when you select your hard drive, typically the C: drive in the Navigation pane and then choose the "Drive tools" tab. Here you will find tools for Optimizing, Cleaning Up, and Formatting disk drives. You may not use these tools very often, but when you need them they will be easily found File Explorer's ability to organize and access our data with all of these tools and features, guarantees it will continue to be the "Keys to the Kingdom."