

# Top 11 Tips for Cleaning-Up Your Files

Please review the following in full before beginning to clean up your files. If you have any questions about cleaning up your files, contact the Help Desk ([help@brynmawr.edu](mailto:help@brynmawr.edu) or x7440).

1. **Set small goals.** Saying that you're going to clean your entire house is a stress-inducing, ambiguous objective, but setting out to vacuum a room is a discrete, attainable goal. Set smaller goals to help you focus and accomplish what's most important to you
2. **Take it slow!** Don't try to move/delete too many files at once. You'll reduce the risk of unintentionally deleting files you need.
3. **Delete only files that you're absolutely sure you don't need from network storage drives .** While the network storage drives are routinely backed up, these backups are meant for large-scale disasters, not individual cases of accidental data loss. Individual files are *very* difficult, if not impossible, to retrieve.
4. **Copy/paste, then delete.** Continuing with the theme of slow and steady, if you are moving files from one location to another, LITS recommends that you first copy/paste the files to the new location, and then delete them from the original location. This helps to ensure the safety of your files in case anything goes wrong during the data transfer.
5. **Work from the bottom of your folder hierarchy.** You wouldn't toss out your entire filing cabinet if you thought there might be files worth saving in the folders within! "Drill down" to the lowest folder level you have to allow you to make more granular decisions about deleting/moving/archiving your files.
6. **Think twice, delete once.** Exercise thoughtfulness and patience throughout your cleaning session. Ensuring the integrity and wellbeing of your files is a top priority when cleaning up your files; rushing through the clean-up process can have adverse effects. First ask yourself, "Do I need to keep this file?", and then, "Does this file belong on the H:/C:/S: drive?"
7. **Create a "to delete" folder if you're not 100% sure.** Not completely confident that you won't need something later? Create a folder for files you'd like to hang on to for a bit longer and move them to this location during your clean-up. Check back after a set period of time (e.g. 2 weeks). If you haven't needed the files, delete them!
8. **PII? Kiss it goodbye!** Delete personally identifiable information and other sensitive data that you no longer need. Simply holding onto it increases the risk that it could fall into the wrong hands.
9. **Understand file size basics and focus on the biggest culprits of space hogging.** 25 old Word documents might take up a trivial 2 Megabytes of storage space on the network storage drive. However, 2 video files might be taking up a whopping 25 Gigabytes of space (which is 25,000 Megabytes!). Start your clean-up by identifying large files that you don't need or that don't belong on the network storage drives. Learn how to sort by file size here: <http://www.viddler.com/v/c6b4538f>. Learn more about the difference between megabytes and gigabytes here: <http://techdocs.blogs.brynmawr.edu/5523>
10. **Know that backing up files and archiving them are not the same.** Creating a backup means that you are creating an identical copy of a file and placing it in a different, but accessible, location in case of data loss. Archiving means you are removing the item from its original location and placing it elsewhere for long-term storage.
11. **Work towards identifying files with unknown owners (on the S: Drive).** If you find a file and you're not certain of who should own it, write down the name and location, and then discuss it with your team before taking further action.