

Learn about computer file management systems

Each operating system has its own file management system that helps to find folders and files

All the data on your computer including the operating system, application programs, etc. and the information you create exists in the form of files - *File* . The files are arranged in one or more folders.



All data on a computer exists in the form of files

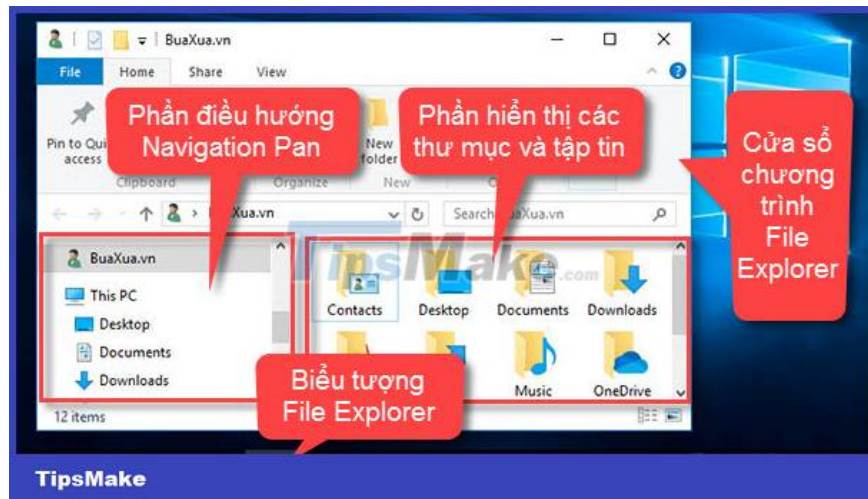
Folder - A *folder* is a special file type that acts as a container, used in managing and organizing files. Regardless of which operating system you use, your computer uses folders to organize all the different files and applications it has. The folder icons on your desktop are designed to look like file folders filled with documents or pictures.

See the article [Concept of files and folders](#)

Your computer's file management system

Each operating system has its own file management system, which helps you find your folders and files. If you have a Windows PC, you will use *File Explorer* aka *Windows Explorer* . If you have a Mac, you'll use *Finder* . Here, we will talk about the basic functions common to all computerized file management systems. On computers using Windows or macOS operating systems, the file management system icon will usually be on the toolbar.

1. *In the Windows operating system, the File Explorer icon looks like a folder, as shown in the image below.*



In the Windows operating system, the File Explorer icon looks like a folder

1. In the macOS operating system, the Finder icon looks like a face on the Dock, as shown in the image below.



In macOS the Finder icon looks like a face on the Dock

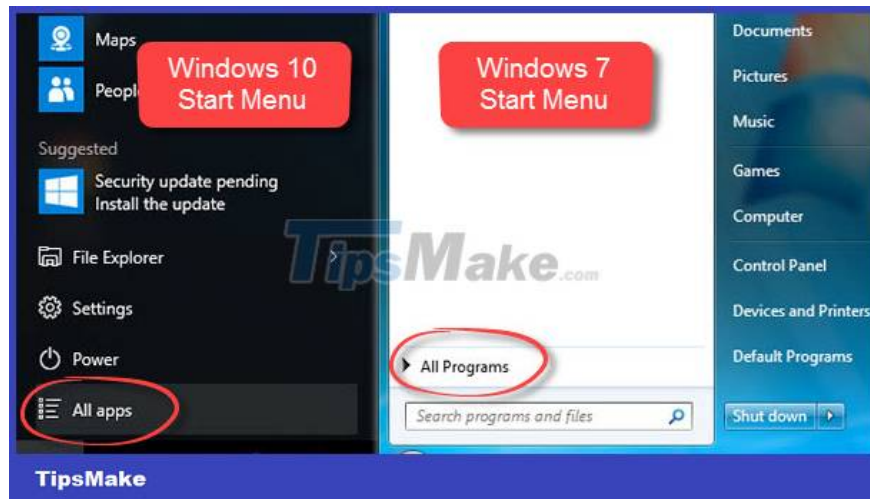
In both operating systems, you can also open the file manager by clicking on a folder from your desktop.

Whether you're using *File Explorer* or *Finder*, the basic navigation works the same way. If you see the file you want, you can double-click it with your mouse. If not, you can use the *Navigation Pane* on the left side of the window to select a different location.

Open files and applications

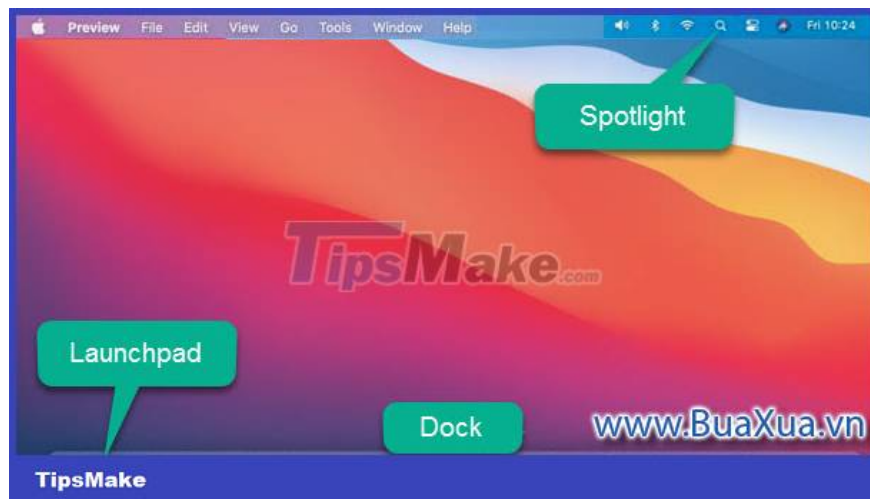
Each application on your computer has a set of file types or formats that the application can open. When you double-click a file, your computer automatically uses the correct application to open the file.

To open an application in Windows, click the Start button, then select the application that you want to open. If you don't see the app you want, you can click *All Programs* or *All Apps* to see the full list, scroll through the list of apps in Windows, or just type the app name on your keyboard to search.



Open an application in Windows

To open an app on your Mac, click the app's icon in *the Dock* . If you don't see the app you want, click the *Launchpad* icon to see a list of all the apps on your computer. You can also click the *Spotlight* icon located in the top-right corner of the screen, then type the name of the app on your keyboard to search for it.



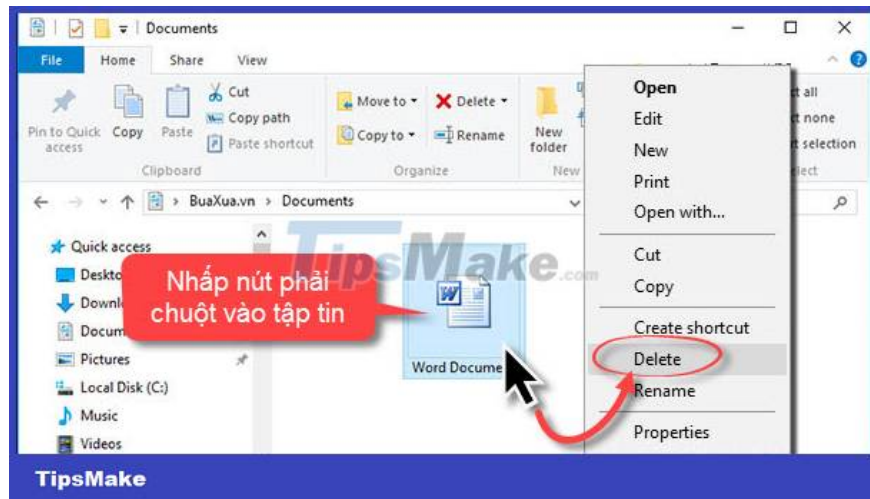
Open an app on your Mac

For example, you will have 2 ways to open a Microsoft Word text file.

1. You double click on the text file with the Microsoft Word icon, this file will open in the Microsoft Word application.
2. You open the Microsoft Word application program, then access the *File* Menu and select *Open* to open the Microsoft Word text file.

Delete folder or file

To delete a folder or file you just need to click to select it and press the delete key - *Delete* or *Del* on the keyboard. You can also right-click a folder or file and then select *Delete* from the Menu to delete it.



Delete folder or file

There may be a dialog box that prompts you to confirm the deletion of this folder or file, select *OK* or *Yes* to agree to delete.

If you delete a folder, the subfolders and files within it will also be deleted.

The Recycle Bin in macOS is *Trash Can* and Windows is *the Recycle Bin* , which is used to prevent you from accidentally deleting files. When you delete a file, the file is moved to the recycle bin. If you change your mind, you can move the file back to its original location.

If you want to permanently delete files, you will need to empty the recycle bin. To do this, right-click the trash can icon and choose *Empty Recycle Bin* or *Empty the Trash* .



Empty the trash

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