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FOLLOW-ALONG CLASS GUIDE

Organizing Your Digital Life

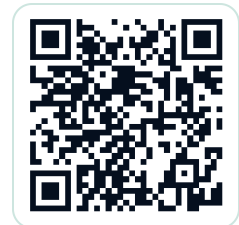
Simple systems for photos, files, and documents. Use this guide during class and keep it nearby when practicing at home.

Online class access

Use this workshop access code for one year of online access to the Organizing Your Digital Life course.

DIGITALLIFE2026

Course link: <https://codeforce.us/courses/organizing-your-digital-life/>



Class promise: this is calm, beginner-friendly, and practical. The goal is not to organize everything today. The goal is to learn a system that can be repeated.

Need help later?

Call/text: 413-887-4355
Email: contact@codeforce.us
codeforce.us

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Welcome

You are in the right place. This class is not about being “good at technology.” It is about learning simple systems that reduce stress and make files easier to find.

There are no silly questions. We are not rushing. Simple is better than complicated.

Helpful tip: Start with one small win. One organized folder is progress.

02

What Is Digital Clutter

Digital clutter looks like:

- Files saved in random places
- Hundreds of photos with no organization
- A Downloads folder that keeps growing
- Multiple copies of the same file

This happens to almost everyone.

Think of your computer or phone like a filing cabinet. Most people have everything dumped into one drawer. Today, we organize the drawers.

Helpful tip: Clutter is not a personal failure. It usually means the system was never made simple enough.

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The Golden Rule

If you cannot explain your system out loud, it is too complicated.

Helpful tip: Try saying the folder plan in one sentence before moving files.

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Start With Main Folders

Create only a few main folders (big buckets).

Common examples:

- Documents
- Photos
- Medical
- Financial
- Personal
- Downloads

You do not need all of these.

Example folders: Documents > Bills, Letters, Forms Photos > Family, Events, Vacations

Create folders first. Do not move files yet.

Helpful tip: If a folder name makes you pause, choose a simpler word.

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Important Reminder

Your folder system is not permanent. You can change it anytime. The goal is progress, not perfection.

Helpful tip: Good systems are allowed to change as your life changes.

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Why File Names Matter

Confusing file names: IMG_4839 Scan001 Final_final_v3

These do not help later.

Helpful tip: A good file name should tell you what the file is without opening it.

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File Naming Formula

Date - Topic - Details

Examples: 2025-02-Doctor-Visit.pdf 2024-12-Electric-Bill.pdf 2023-07-Family-Reunion.jpg

If future-you understands it, it's correct.

Dates go first because they:

- Keep files in order
- Make searching easier
- Save time

Helpful tip: Use dashes between words so the name stays readable.

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Moving Files Into Folders

Moving a file does NOT delete it. It only changes where the file lives.

Start with ONE file only.

Cut = move Copy = make a second copy Paste = place the file

If you feel nervous, use Copy.

To move multiple files:

- Click the first file
- Hold Shift
- Click the last file

One file at a time is always okay.

Helpful tip: When learning, practice on a harmless file first.

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Where Should Files Be Saved

Before saving a file, ask:

- What is this?
- Where would I look for it later?

Save intentionally, not randomly.

Helpful tip: Pausing before Save is one of the easiest ways to prevent clutter.

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Storage Options (Plain English)

- Your device
- Original copy
- Can be lost or damaged
- USB drive
- Physical backup
- Good for important documents
- Cloud storage
- Saved on the internet
- Accessible anywhere

Cloud examples: Google Drive iCloud OneDrive

You do not have to use cloud storage.

Helpful tip: The best storage choice is the one you understand well enough to use again.

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When Cloud Storage Is Helpful

Cloud storage helps if:

- You use more than one device
- You want photo backups
- You worry about losing files

It is okay to use:

- Computer + USB
- Computer + Cloud
- Or all three

There is no wrong choice.

Helpful tip: Cloud storage is a tool, not a requirement.

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Simple Recommendations

Important documents:

- Save on your device
- Back up to a USB drive

Photos:

- Keep on your phone
- Back up to cloud if available

Never keep only one copy of important files.

Helpful tip: Start by backing up the files that would be hardest to replace.

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What To Avoid

- Saving everything only in email
- Letting Downloads pile up forever
- Relying on memory instead of folders

Helpful tip: Email is for messages. Important files deserve a real folder.

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A Simple Daily Habit

Spend 5-10 minutes:

- Move new files into folders
- Rename important files
- Delete what you no longer need

You do not need to do everything at once.

Helpful tip: Set a timer. Stop when the timer ends. Small routines work because they are realistic.

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Final Thought

Technology should support your life, not stress you out. You are more capable than you think.

Helpful tip: Confidence comes from repeating small steps, not memorizing everything at once.

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Contact Information

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Helpful tip: For patient follow-up help, call or text 413-887-4355.