

Downloading Files

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A wonderful thing about the Internet is that computers on the Internet can access files (or software applications) from other computers connected to the Internet or give file access to users who are connecting to the Internet. Downloading a file simply means copying that file from one computer to another. Keep in mind that files can only be downloaded between computers that are connected to each other, whether they are connected through cables (local area network) or modems and phone lines (the Internet).

Zip Files and Self Extracting Files

Most files that can be downloaded from the Internet are either zip files or self extracting files. A zip file will have a .zip file extension (the last three characters of the file name preceded by a .) and a self extracting file will have a .exe file extension. Zip files and self extracting files are usually a group of files that have been zipped up or compacted into one file. You can easily see that compressing files into one downloadable file makes the file transfer (or download) much faster across the Internet and keeps it simple for users. Once you download a zip or self extracting file to your disk (hard disk or floppy disk), you must unzip or extract the file. (Hint: download files to a Temp directory on your disk so that you can move the files to their own directory once they have been unzipped or exploded. Keeping the Temp directory periodically cleaned out will make unzipping or exploding files and moving them a much easier task.)

Self extracting files are very easy to explode. For that reason you will probably find more and more of today's downloadable files to be self extracting files. If you are working in a Windows 95/98/98/98 environment, go to the Windows 95/98 Desktop, click the Start button, select Settings then Control Panel options. Double click Add/Remove Programs then click the Install button. Click the Next button then click the Browse button. Locate and select the file you wish to extract by clicking once on it then click the Open button. Windows 95/98 will automatically extract the file and begin the installation of the program. If you are working in a Windows 3.X environment, go into Windows File Manager, locate the self extracting file on your disk, and double click your mouse on the file to explode it. If you are working in a DOS environment, go to the DOS prompt (C:/>) and type in the filename and press <Enter>. Right before your eyes you will see one file turn into many files.

Zip files are not as easy to unzip. You will need special software to unzip your zip file. One of the most popular software packages of this kind is PKZIP for Windows and PKZIP for DOS. You can download this software from the PKWARE Inc. web site at the following URL: <http://www.pkware.com>.

Accessing Downloaded Files

Once you have unzipped or exploded your downloaded file into the Temp directory on your disk, create another directory on your disk with a meaningful name and move the files into that directory. Sometimes the software is ready to run after unzipping or exploding the file, but if you notice a file called setup.exe or install.exe among the list of files, you will probably have to install the software to execute it. If you are working in a Windows 95/98 environment, see the Zip Files and Self Extracting Files section of this brochure for instructions on installing zip and self-extracting files. If you are working in a Windows 3.X environment, you can install the software by going into Windows, click on File from the menu bar, and select Run from the pull down menu. Type in the name of the installation file with its full location path (ex: c:\netscape\setup.exe) and press <Enter>. The installation program should take you through the setup of the software without any problems. If you are working in a DOS environment, simply type in the filename at the DOS prompt and the installation program will begin. Keep in mind, though, that a Windows program can only be installed through Windows (Windows - File - Run).

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