

Organize your files into groups in XP, Vista and Windows 7


Windows offers a variety of options for organizing folders and files in the ways that work best for you.

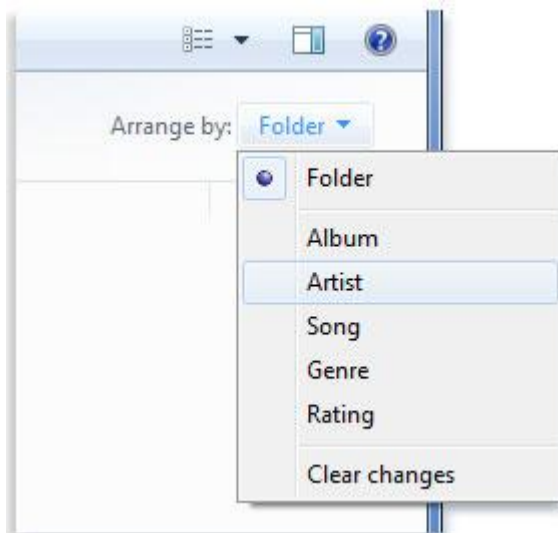
Windows 7

The easiest and most effective way to organize your stuff in Windows 7 is to **use file arrangements in your libraries**.

You can arrange files in the Documents library by author, for example, or you can arrange the Music library *by artist* if you're looking for an album or song by a particular band.

To arrange a library

1. In the taskbar, click the **Windows Explorer** button .
2. In the navigation pane (the left pane), click a library (such as **Music**).
3. In the library pane (above the file list), click the **Arrange by** menu, and then choose a property. For example, in the Music library, you can choose **Artist** to quickly arrange your music collection by artist.



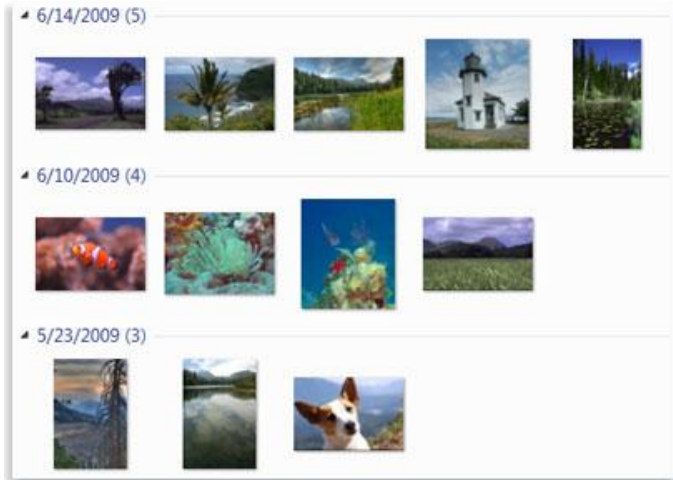
The "Arrange by" menu

4. When you arrange your files, Windows doesn't just put your files in a different order. Instead, they are presented in a completely different way. The arrangements work differently depending on which one you choose. For example, arranging your pictures by month puts your pictures into *stacks*, like this:



Files arranged in "stacks"

Arranging by day puts them into *groups*, like this:



Files arranged in "groups"

There are four default libraries in Windows 7, each with its own specific arrangements. You can also create new libraries and choose which arrangements are available for them.

Windows Vista

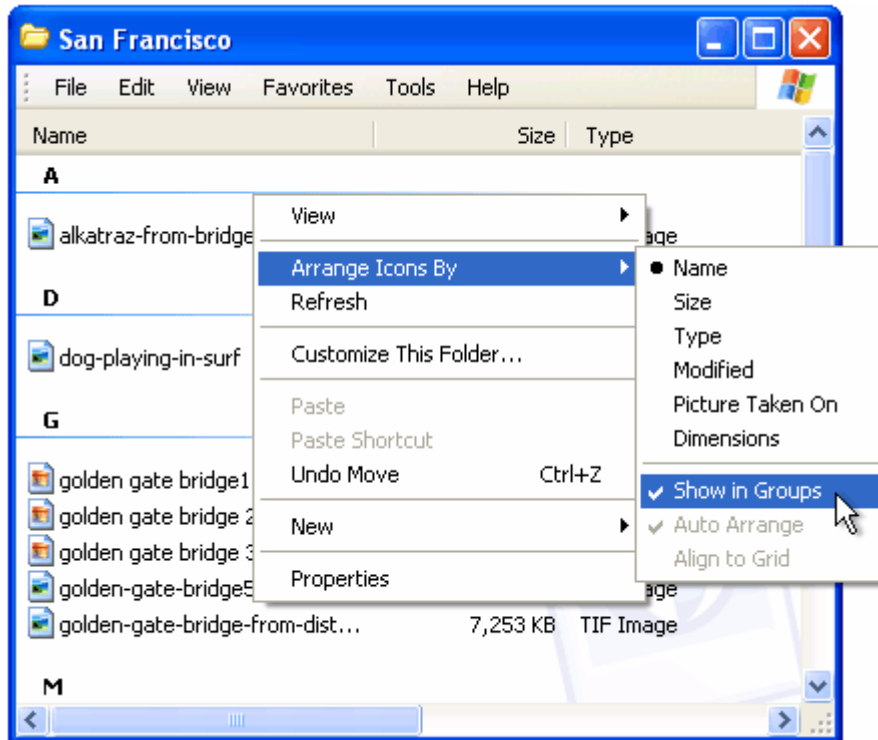
Open a folder that contains several different subfolders and file types. Right-click any empty space on the window's contents pane, point to **Group By**, and then click your grouping choice



Windows Vista Group by command

Windows XP

Open a folder that contains several different subfolders and file types. Right-click any empty space on the window's contents pane, point to **Arrange Icons By**, and then click **Show in Groups**. To arrange the window's contents, right-click again in any empty space on the window's contents pane, point to **Arrange Icons By**, and click **Name**, **Size**, **Type**, or **Modified** (the choices may vary depending on the contents).



Windows XP Arrange icons by command.