

Pastel: A proposal to reflect recency in folder and file displays

There is a need for visual display of folders and files most recently used, both on PC and MacIntosh. The user, opening a file, or saving a new file to folder, is faced with a blank list of locations and file names. A quick reminder would be helpful.

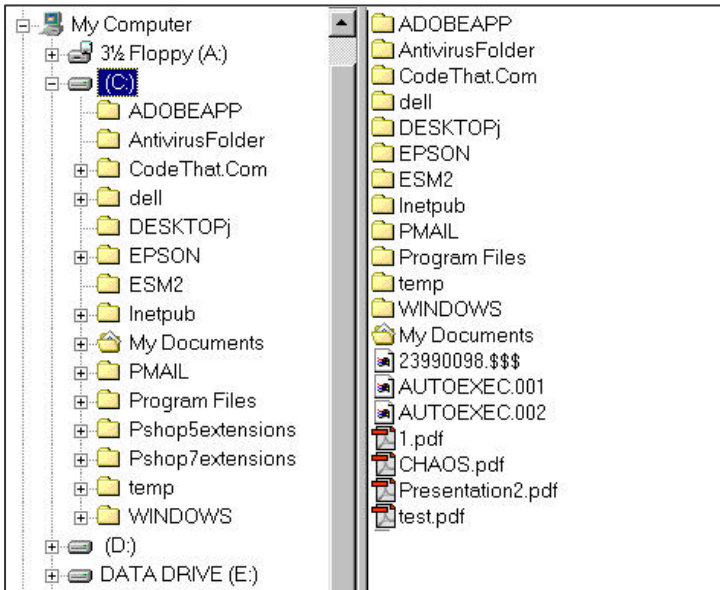


Figure 1. Bland display of files/folders

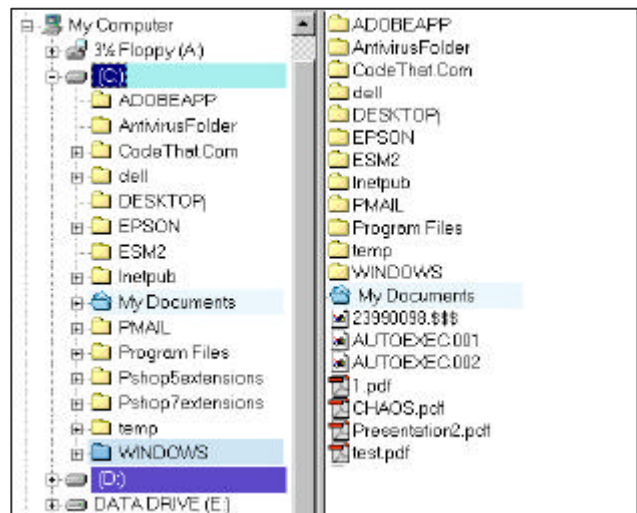
Color-coding according to recency. A solution is to color or otherwise highlight file and folder names according to when they were last used. Specific colours may be associated with file-types (e.g. graphics versus text), but that is not favoured here.

A decision must be made between font colour and density, and background colour and density. A resolution is to exploit this for information purposes.

- (i) recency in files = font density
- (ii) recency in folders = background density

Why this way round? On a list of files and folders, with folders typically above, this arrangement affords a greater priority to folders.

Figure 2. Folder coloration according to recency



Exclusions. To be useful, recency coding must be restricted to user-created or user-saved files. Other routine files (system, cache, log, email, etc) are to be excluded. The best way of achieving this is to sort according to file types. Exclude .dat and .log files, include .doc and .jpg files. This may be insufficient, because some files are both user-written and system-written (many .txt files), but these are rarely if ever in the same folder.

Gradients and time. A system to color / contrast according to date.



Figure 3. Example of file and folder gradation using font for files and color for folders.

Figure 4A. Example of a screen display of folders shaded according to recency.

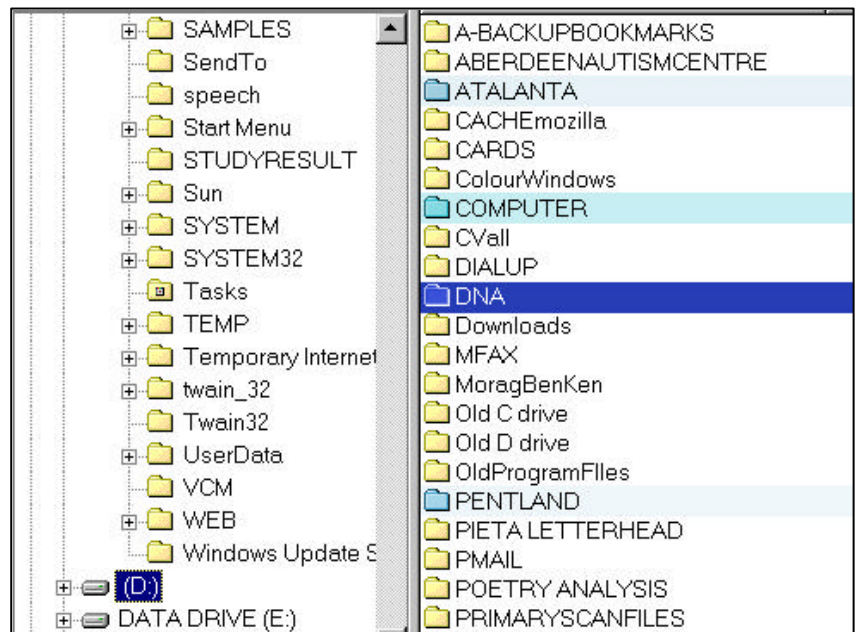


Figure 4B. Example of a file display highlighted according to recency.

Name	Size	Type	Modified
LONGSDALE2002		File Folder	04/03/03 13:10
ONALAJA2000_files		File Folder	07/12/04 18:01
ABE1989.pdf	770KB	Adobe Acrobat...	21/12/04 14:47
ADAMS2003.pdf	24KB	Adobe Acrobat...	18/03/04 12:14
ADAMS2003abs.pdf	12KB	Adobe Acrobat...	14/11/04 13:35
ALBERTI1.PDF	84KB	Adobe Acrobat...	08/09/04 15:17
ALDRED1993.pdf	1,277KB	Adobe Acrobat...	05/09/02 19:14
ALLAN2003.pdf	360KB	Adobe Acrobat...	22/12/04 14:22
ALVAREZ2001.pdf	461KB	Adobe Acrobat...	19/09/02 08:57
AMBROGINI2004.pdf	774KB	Adobe Acrobat...	29/10/04 08:15
ANDRES2002.pdf	137KB	Adobe Acrobat...	20/06/02 20:00
APISARNTH2002.pdf	106KB	Adobe Acrobat...	10/10/02 16:10
ARNESANO2002.pdf	1,963KB	Adobe Acrobat...	14/06/03 15:07
ASHWOOD2004.pdf	136KB	Adobe Acrobat...	09/11/04 19:39
AYLWARD1993.pdf	123KB	Adobe Acrobat...	30/08/02 18:37
AZMITHA2001.pdf	429KB	Adobe Acrobat...	20/07/02 20:14
BACHEVALIER1993.pdf	171KB	Adobe Acrobat...	19/09/02 09:46
BAHI2003.pdf	1,036KB	Adobe Acrobat...	26/10/04 13:52
BAIRD2004.pdf	173KB	Adobe Acrobat...	06/09/02 12:54
BALDWIN1999.pdf	375KB	Adobe Acrobat...	21/12/04 14:59
BANASR2002.pdf	367KB	Adobe Acrobat...	02/11/04 13:46
BANNERMAN2001.pdf	325KB	Adobe Acrobat...	19/09/02 09:32
BANNERMAN2002.pdf	150KB	Adobe Acrobat...	19/09/02 09:22
BARONCOHEN2000.pdf	303KB	Adobe Acrobat...	05/09/02 12:56
BARONCOHEN2002.pdf	57KB	Adobe Acrobat...	05/09/02 12:50
BARTELS2004.pdf	1,712KB	Adobe Acrobat...	19/07/04 11:00
BAULAC2004.PDF	204KB	Adobe Acrobat...	11/10/04 16:48
BAUREGARDabstract.pdf	23KB	Adobe Acrobat...	19/09/02 09:57
BECKER1993.pdf	248KB	Adobe Acrobat...	19/09/02 09:47
BELMONTE2003.pdf	210KB	Adobe Acrobat...	14/06/03 13:43
BELMONTE2004.pdf	215KB	Adobe Acrobat...	19/07/04 10:59
BERNARD2001.pdf	319KB	Adobe Acrobat...	23/01/03 13:44
BERNEY2000.pdf	167KB	Adobe Acrobat...	20/07/02 20:56

Variable temporal display curve according to recent usage. A uniform 1:1 correspondence between recency and display has drawbacks. A user returning to the computer after some weeks away will find most files reduced to colorless. To avoid this the last 100 files should be considered, and plotted on a scale to determine the display.

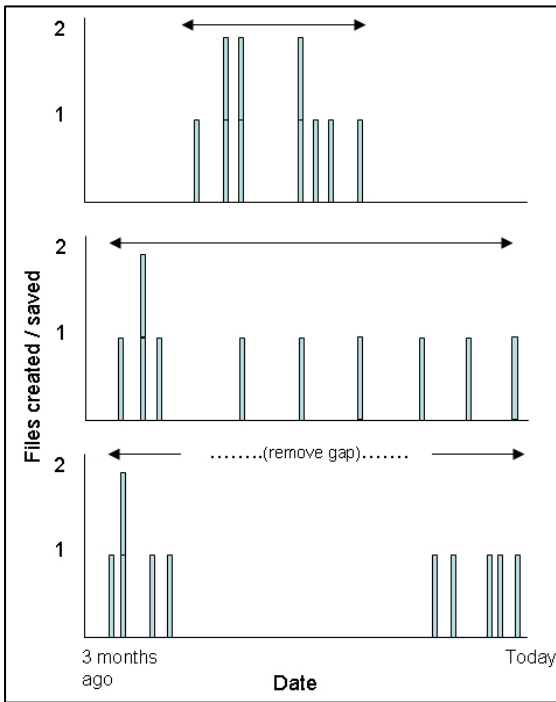


Figure 5. Setting display curve according to usage. Arrowed regions indicate the temporal range on which to impose the most-least recent usage gradient.

User-defined preferences. It will be helpful to have a display box to be opened where the user can define the range of the color coding – e.g., uniform over last week, or last month, or last three months, or last year.

RL 4 January 2004