

THE WEEKLY GEEK



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Welcome to The Weekly Geek

This is a new e-newsletter from the Information & Instructional Technology Departments at Dakota County Technical College. Each week will have a different technology related topic.



Zip It!

Many times when you download a file from the internet or an email attachment the file extension (3-4 letters following the . in the file name) is a .zip file.

A zip file is really just a container for other files. You could think of it like a suitcase, if you are going on a trip you take many items...shirts, shoes, pants, clean underwear (in case you are in an accident) and other items. If you had to carry each item separately it would take a longer time and take up more space to move those items from snowy Minnesota to sunny Cancun. But if you put all the individual items in a suitcase, you only have to move one item from place to place, and then you can unpack the suitcase when you get to your destination and use the items.

So, if you have a group of files or a folder or files, you can zip them into one .zip file and send them to the destination and the recipient can un-zip the folder and access the individual files and folder. This is more efficient in both time and space to send files from one place to another. You would need to attach one file to an email to send 10 files for example.

Zip files also can compress or reduce file sizes. Each file on a computer is made of individual bytes of data and sometimes there are extra non-needed bytes floating around taking up space. A zip file can smooch (yes that is a technical term) the extra bytes out of file and make the file storage space smaller. Think of it like trying to pack too much in your suitcase and you can't quite get it to zip up...so you sit on your suitcase and it smooshes down the contents and gets rid of extra air cushions between items and you are able to zip up the luggage.

How to create a zip file:

On Windows:

Locate the file or folder that you want to compress.

Right-click the file or folder, point to Send To, and then click Compressed (zipped) Folder.

A new compressed folder is created. To rename it, right-click the folder, click Rename, and then type the new name.

How to extract files (un-zip):

Locate the compressed folder that you want to extract files or folders from.

Do one of the following:

- To extract a single file or folder, double-click the compressed folder to open it. Then, drag the file or folder from the compressed folder to a new location.
- To extract the entire contents of the compressed folder, right-click the folder, click Extract All, and then follow the instructions.

Other tools for creating or opening zip files:

- [Win Zip](#)
- [7-zip](#)