# Using Folders to Organize Your e-Mail

Folders are a key element of organizing the volumes of important tips that you will receive over the West Point.Org networks for the next 4 years. If you have not yet learned to tame the email beast,  here are some tips to try while your Cadet Candidate is taming the real "beast" this summer.

Tap the skills of your candidate before s/he goes on to R Day if you don't know how to create a folder – learn (and if necessary, write it down) to create a folder. On most email tools, you would click on File, then New, then Folder so that you can name the new folder.  If you accidentally create a folder in the wrong place, just drag and drop it where you want it.  It's not too hard... just play with it a bit.

Learning this basic skill now will pay dividends !

## WHY use Folders ?

You will receive roughly 10 – 20 emails per day from the network.  Some of the emails are important TODAY,  some are important TOMORROW,  and some are important in a few months,  such as the Plebe Parent Weekend.  What you want to do is open each email,  skim it (let's be truthful),  and then decide what to do with that piece of email. Your choices are delete, go to the next email,  or FILE that email.  I try to discard or file each email, and seldom just open a piece of email and leave it in my "in-box".    I usually delete "question" emails  (they really aren't deleted – they go into my trash folder until I "empty" the trash folder,  so this is not a bold action... there's a way to recover them) and then look for the **answer** to file.  The key is how / where to file mail  (more on this step in the next section).    But you FILE important mail so that you can recover it quickly.  Next year,  on Parent Net,  we will teach you how to use a tool to search the Archives,  but for this year,  you must save the important mail in your personal folders. In addition to showing you some folder structures,  I will also explain why certain emails should be saved.

## Examples of Folders

Key attributes of good folder structure are:  easy to remember where you filed a note, not too many folders so you "lose" notes,   enough folders so that you can "find" notes, and logically named to define what the purpose of the folder is.   Let's look at some of

my folders  (and remember – you get to choose the name which makes sense to you !) Here is an example of my "travel"folder which is a parent folder with nested subfolders for different categories.  I am showing



**Parent Folder**
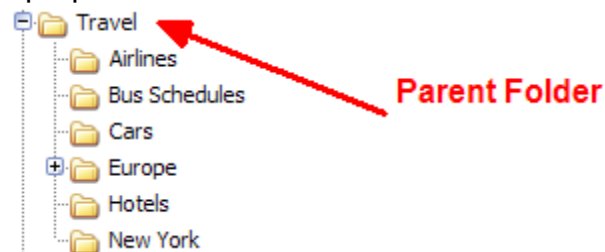
the Travel Folder "expanded" so that you can see all the subfolders.   Travel is a very important to me because I save the emails on any travel topic.   All of my cadet's airline reservations (as well as our reservations when we fly to West Point) are stored in the Airline subfolder.  You will eventually see  Plebe Net notes on the bus schedules for the

leave weekends....yes,  store them here.  They will also be on one of the WP-ORG websites,  but I like instant access to the schedule whether I am online or not.   Cars – you guessed it.. info on any rental reservations that I make,  and you will store the details on which car company will actually rent to your cadet.  No, this info will not be posted on Plebe Net so you have to store it someplace. Ditto for the Hotels folder.  I

have started collecting tips on New York which are stored in the New York folder.  And Europe is a another Parent folder with lots of details buried in subfolders below.     So you can see that a very detailed Travel parent folder with several subfolders as shown can be very useful for organizing your perfect trip to West Point.   Let's move to some potential West Point folder names.   The blue arrow shows that I have "collapsed" the parent Travel folder so that the subfolders are not showing.  You can



see the small box with the + sign to the left of the folder Travel – that tells me that there are subfolders under Travel.
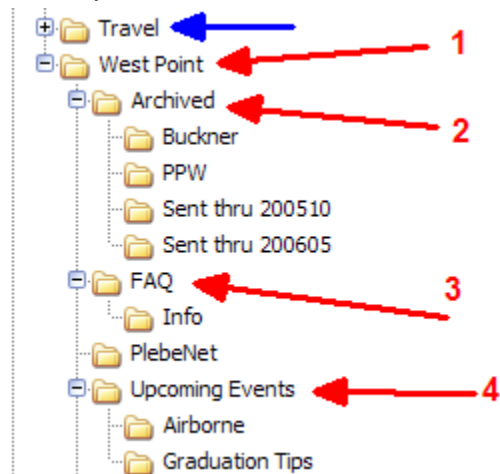
   Now let's look at the parent folder "West Point" (1)  and its subfolders: Archived (2), FAQ (3),  PlebeNet,   and Upcoming Events (4).    Here's why I created each subfolder.

## Archived (2)
This parent folder contains subfolders that are historical in nature to me.  Historical, because the event has passed by,  and I'm saving the notes to pass on info to other people when asked.

> **Buckner:**  This folder contains all the notes that I saved on Buckner near the end of my cadet's plebe year as he prepared for going to Buckner.   Because his yearling summer is over,  I moved the folder to Archived.
> **PPW:**  All the notes that I saved between R Day and Plebe Parent Weekend in 2004.
> **Sent thru....  :**  Occasionally you want to archive all the notes that you send to reduce the size of your Sent folder.   I drag and drop the notes in my sent folder to an archive folder, which improves my email performance.

## FAQ (3)
It's hard to describe this folder except that I store some very common answers that I will post to the forums.   Sometimes you write a very detailed, useful append,  and then a parent asks the same question two days later.   I keep those postings here... so that I can re-post the same information.  **IF you use folders,  you will be an organized parent who will have the information when you need it... that's our goal...**

**PlebeNet**
There's an archive tool on ParentNet that will allow you to search the historical postings, but not on PlebeNet, so I store notes that look important to the parents here. We'll teach you how to search the archives next year.

**Upcoming Events (4)**

**Airborne:** My cadet will be going to Airborne School this summer. So I have collected notes starting **last year** on Airborne school. Yes – your cadet may be going to Airborne OR Air Assault OR Sapper OR… hint hint ... save the notes / use the archives next year.

**Graduation Tips:** Uh... yes... I'm saving good tips from the class of 2005 / 06 / 07 so that I am ready for 2008. Your cadet will learn to do an AAR – After Action Review... I'm just collecting from the AAR's posted by the parents ahead of me. It's amazing how many questions were asked in 2006 that were the same questions from 2005. I predict that some 2007 parents will ask the same questions again. In some cases, the parents will be **too late** in their graduation preparation because they didn't file the notes from the previous graduation classes. "Go to school" on the class ahead of you... learn from their lessons, build your plan for events and execute it.

**What other folders do you need ?**
I have just as many folders for my activities with the West Point Parents Club of North Carolina. You should create a parent folder for your state parents club and create subfolders for key messages which relate to your club... Some of my examples include the Hail and Farewell Picnic, Football Tailgate, All Academy Ball, Officer duties, etc. I will typically abbreviate each: HF Picnic, AAB, etc.

**What's next ?**
**Start creating your folders**. If you don't know how, ask your Cadet Candidate and get them to help you create a set of empty folders, then you should build some more to be sure you understand how. Then when that next note comes into your inbox from PlebeNet, think:

Discard or File (and which folder!)

You **CAN** tame the email Beast ! Become an organized Plebe parent. You will reduce your stress when you "need an answer" asap and you took the time to carefully save the information in a folder.

It's just too easy...