Show file name extensions

MA Web Design + Content Planning

For the most part, working with files on your laptop is straightforward. If you want to know what type of file you are working with, you can look at the file icon. For example, when you work with a Microsoft Word document, it displays with an icon like the one shown. You know that if you want to open that file, you can simply double-click it and Word will automatically open with that file, ready for editing. The fact that the file has a **.docx** extension is irrelevant for most users, so modern operating systems hide file extensions by default.

However, when working with web documents, things are a little more complicated. Say you have an HTML file. By default, it will open and display in your preferred web browser when you double-click it. But what if you want to open it in a code editor? Well, you could drag-and-drop it into your open code editor. But you can't be 100% certain the file is an HTML file if you cannot see the file extension.

Similarly, some applications will be associated with several file types:

index.php		14/07/2023 14:12
style.css		14/07/2023 14:11

These two files are associated with the Sublime Text code editor and they both display with the same icon. The only way we can tell which is the CSS file and which is the PHP file is if we can see the file extensions.
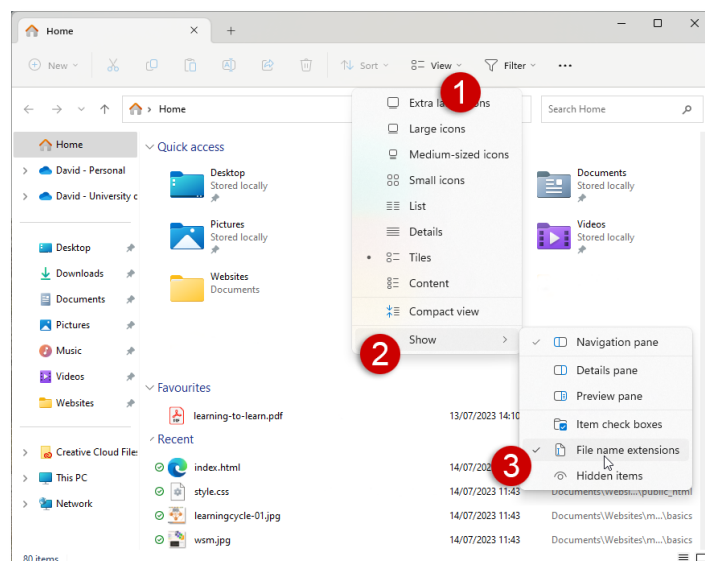
So, to work effectively with web documents, you must always show file extensions when viewing them in File Explorer on Windows and in Finder on MacOS. Here's how to do it:

Windows 11

Open File Explorer from the Task Bar.

1. Click the **View** option in the toolbar to reveal a drop-down menu.
2. Select the **Show** option to reveal a sub-menu.
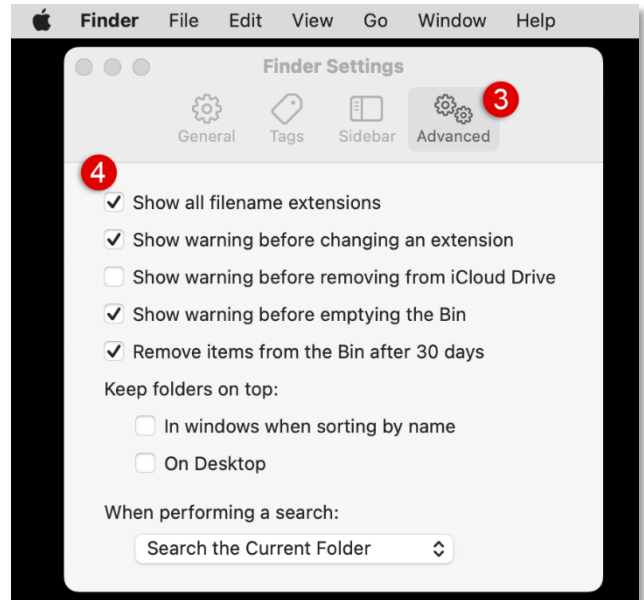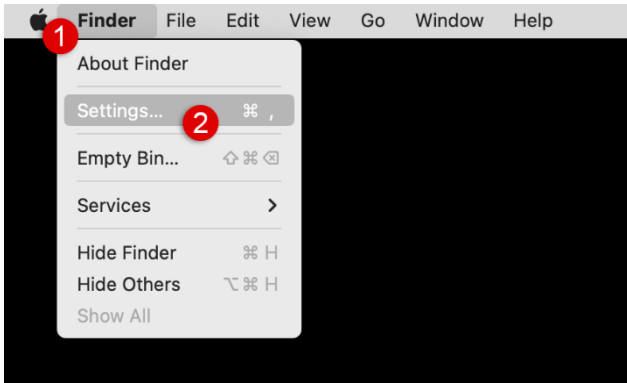3. Click **File name extensions**.

maweb.design

MacOS Ventura 13

Open Finder from the Dock.

1. Click **Finder** in the top menu bar to reveal a drop-down menu.

2. Select **Settings...** to display Finder Settings.

3. Click **Advanced** to display the advanced settings.

4. Check **Show all file extensions**.

Note: in earlier versions of MacOS, "Settings" is referred to as "Preferences", but the meaning is the same.

Once this is done, you will always see file names displayed with their extensions.

Now that you have prepared your laptop for web work, the next thing to do is to consider how you will organise the files and folders on your laptop.

July 2023

maweb.design