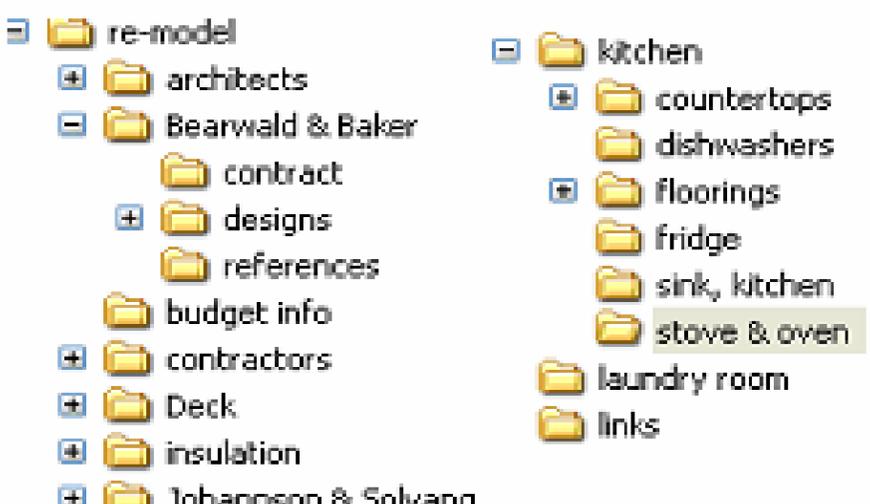
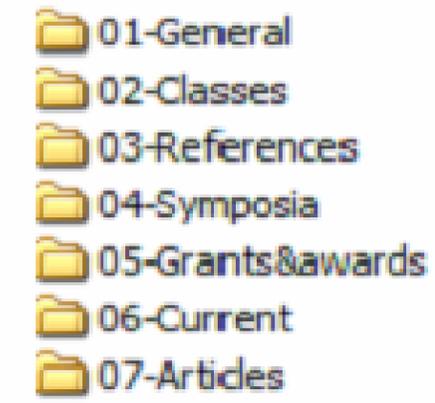


People:	William Jones, Harry Bruce	Affiliation:	The Information School, U. of Washington
Project:	<i>Keeping Found Things Found: The Project as a Unit of Analysis in PIM</i>		
<p>What?</p> <p>Exploratory research looks at the kinds of projects people manage in their daily lives, the problems they encounter and the kinds of support people need to manage better. The personal project is advanced as a tractable unit of analysis for the study of PIM.</p> <p>The study of PIM: Help people manage their information over time and across applications. But...How? For how long? In what contexts?</p>	<p>Results so far:</p> <p>People create planning documents – sometimes simple to-do lists, sometimes more elaborate outlines – when working on a variety of personal projects. People also create folder structures that serve as an external representation (ER) for their understanding of a project. People tend to order and to re-use folder structures on new projects. The Project Planner, a module in the Universal Labeler prototype, is designed to provide rich-text, document like views into a folder structure that can be used to organize email messages, web information and files. Folder structures can be repeatedly re-used as well.</p> <p>The planner aspires to an ideal in an integrative organization of information can emerge as an outgrowth of efforts to plan a project and manage its tasks.</p>		
<p>Why?</p> <p>A personal project may serve as a tractable unit of analysis for the study of PIM. Most personal projects are bounded in scope and time and they provide an excellent context in which to analyze information management activities. A full range of tools, computer-based and otherwise, are often involved in a project's completion. The study of PPM, therefore, provides a practical way to approach PIM without “falling into” existing tool-based partitions (e.g. by studying only email use or only Web use).</p>	<p>Figure 1. People use folder organization to plan.</p> 		
<p>How?</p> <p>Study One was designed to get a better sense for the kinds of projects people are working on at a given point in time, the forms of information used and the approaches that people employ in the planning of these projects.</p> <p>Twelve people participated in the study (9 men, 3 women, from 35 to 63 in age). Occupations varied: two software designers, three small business owners (one retired), two stay-at-home parents (both doing lots of volunteer work), two software product managers, one retired engineer, one software sales manager, and one real estate agent.</p> <p>Study Two was designed to gain a deeper understanding for how people organize the various forms of information that relate to a given project. Special attention was given to the role of folders and naming conventions in the structuring of project-related information.</p> <p>Fourteen participants (six women, eight men, ages from 25 to 62) each completed a session of 60 to 90 minutes in length.</p>	<p>Figure 2. People try to order.</p> 		<p>Figure 3. An attempt to re-use structure.</p> 