



Color Code Your Electronic Folders

I have long been a proponent of color coding as a means of improving the efficiency of paper filing systems. When I speak to lawyers or legal staff about file management, I recount how we color coded files in the early 1980s when I was a legal assistant: “Red for domestic relations, Green for real property, Yellow for personal injury cases,” and so on. Almost 30 years have passed since I learned that system, and it’s still ingrained in my mind.

To say I was thrilled when I heard about Folder Marker from [Courtney Kennaday](#) is an understatement. (Virtual “fist bump” to my fellow practice management advisor from the [South Carolina Bar](#).)

Why Should I Color Code?

By associating a color with a folder type you can quickly find what you’re looking for. It’s that simple. When Ms. Smith calls about her divorce, it’s easy to pick out the **red** file sitting on your credenza or the **red** folder on your computer. If documents need to be filed in the Jones real property and personal injury cases, the appropriate green and yellow folders can be distinguished – in your paper or electronic filing cabinet.

If you prefer, you can use plain folders for main client files and color code subfiles: Blue for legal research, Yellow for pleadings, Red for discovery, Green for witness statements.

No matter which approach you choose, color coding will save you time.

Paper Filing Systems

Many of the tidbits I shared in [Setting Up an Effective Filing System](#) are still valid today. If you struggle with organizing your paper files, check out this article. Also see the resources on the [PLF Web site](#) at Practice Aids and Forms as well as Books from the PLF.

Using Folder Marker to Jazz Up Your Electronic Filing Cabinet

[Folder Marker](#) from Arctic Line Software allows you to mark electronic folders based on:

- Priority (high, normal, low)
- Project completeness level (done, half-done, planned)
- Stage of development (one, two, three, four, etc.)
- Type of information stored in them (work, important, temp and private files)
- Status (approved/rejected/pending)

How? Install [Folder Marker](#), find a folder you want to mark or color code, right click, then select Mark Folder. You can also launch the [Folder Marker](#) application and browse to mark folders. Distinguish files based on the criteria above or skip all of that and just apply color: Right click on a folder, choose Mark Folder, then Colors. To color multiple folders at one time, just <Ctrl> or <Shift> Select, right click, and follow the same steps.

I'm just getting started, but here are a few of mine:

Download a free 30 day trial of Folder Marker [here](#) by choosing [Download](#) at the top of the page.

Arctic has a [free version for home use](#). It's scaled back, but still offers the ability to mark folders, change folder color, work with multiple folders at once, and change folder icons. The [enhanced home version](#) is \$24.95, the [pro version for the office](#) is \$34.95. Confused? Check out the [product comparison chart](#). How-to articles are posted on the bottom of Arctic's [home page](#), but the product is pretty easy to use. If you have Vista and you want to jazz things up even more, check out Arctic's "[60+ amazing professional Vista folder icons for everyday use](#)."



Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down?

I love color coding, so I don't know how impartial my opinion is, but I give this little application a thumbs up. I made the full move to paperless recordkeeping before we relocated our offices in 2008 and haven't looked back. Anything that helps me find information more quickly or better organize my electronic filing cabinet is a plus in my book.

Note: This is not a paid endorsement of [Folder Marker](#). Practitioners should always conduct their own research when buying products or selecting vendors.

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