

CORTE MADERA SCHOOL
DIGITAL LOCKER
FOR LINUX/OTHER COMPUTERS

How to exchange files between the computer network
at school and your Linux/Other computers at home

Students may find it helpful to transfer data stored on the computer network at school to their computers at home. Students might like to finish an assignment at home that was started at school, collect material at home and send it to school, or even keep copies of their schoolwork at home for future reference. Using a few simple steps, students can link their Windows computers at home to the network at school and copy data back and forth.

Overall Objective:

The overall objective of this process is to “connect to an external server” to make the computer at school appear as “local storage” on your home computer, much like a floppy disk or a memory stick. When this is achieved, copying files is as easy as grabbing a file in one window and dropping it into another window.

Please remember this process is only to copy the student’s data files; not any applications. For example, if the student wishes to work on a *PowerPoint*© presentation, your home computer must also have the *PowerPoint*© application.

To proceed, the student must know their “short name” and their network password. An example: John Smith’s short name will be *jsmith*, although some short names may also have a number at the end to distinguish them from siblings or relatives.

Your home computer must also be connected to the Internet. Please use whatever steps you normally do to connect to the Internet before proceeding.

To connect to the school computer network:

Because of the large variety of different operating systems, and the client programs on those systems, it’s impractical to attempt to describe and test them all. Plus, if one is knowledgeable about computers enough to choose an alternate operating system, then one likely has the knowledge to make this work for them.

If one should use RedHat Linux, the Konqueror file manager application does very well at providing a seamless “drop and drag” interface. Other operating systems may likely have a similar package.

After choosing your favorite FTP client, the three pieces of information necessary are:

1. Host name. This is students.cms.pvsd.net
2. Login ID. This is the student’s short name.
3. Password. This is the student’s network password.

Once you are connected:

Once you have successfully completed the steps above and have your home computer connected to the school computer, you are free to copy files back and forth from home to school. You may also create additional folders as well as delete files from the school computer.

Be aware however that any recycle bin function your FTP client may have will not operate the same way for remote files as local files and any files deleted from your network storage space will be instantly deleted with no possibility for recovery.

It's important to know where the student's files reside on the computer at school and certain limitations imposed by the computing environment used at school. For most purposes, student work will be stored in the folder called Documents. Files stored in this folder are accessible from any computer on campus and "follow" the student around to whichever computer they use.

Other folders called Pictures, Movies, Music, and Library, are not handled in the same manner as the Documents folder and are only accessible by the OS-X-based computers in Lab 103. It's best to avoid use of these folders and store everything in the Documents folder.

Potential Trouble Spots:

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| Student doesn't have <i>Word</i> | Students will create documents with <i>Microsoft Word</i> . However <i>Word</i> is only available for computers using Microsoft and Apple operating systems. |
| StarOffice (OpenOffice) | <p>Some other operating systems offer a Word-like package called OpenOffice (or StarOffice), which does pretty well at simulating <i>Word</i>, but it's not <i>Word</i> and some things just don't work the same way. Users of OpenOffice often find that <i>Word</i> files will open, but formatting is typically different. Users of OpenOffice must also make special allowances when saving their documents to allow Word to open them.</p> <p>If the student doesn't have a Word-like program at home, it will be difficult for students to make use of work created at school. However, it is still possible to create documents at home and transfer them to school. Please ask the student to discuss this situation with their teacher to devise a solution.</p> |
| Incompatible file types | Users of StarOffice may also find that files created at school using <i>Word</i> won't open at all. The problem lies with <i>Word</i> , and the way it saves files with and without the .doc extension. Should the student forget to append the .doc extension at school, <i>Word</i> will write a different type of file that is not the same as a file created with the .doc extension. If this happens, the student must save the file again at school appending the .doc extension, and transfer this new file for use at home. |
| Difficult file names | Students will create a document and use characters in the file name that might not work on other systems. When naming files, it's best to stick to |

numbers and letters and to use the underscore (_) character instead of spaces.

Text Files

Different operating systems represent regular text files in different ways. This isn't typically a problem because the students don't generally use regular text files.

When you are finished:

To close the connection to the school computer, merely close your FTP application.