

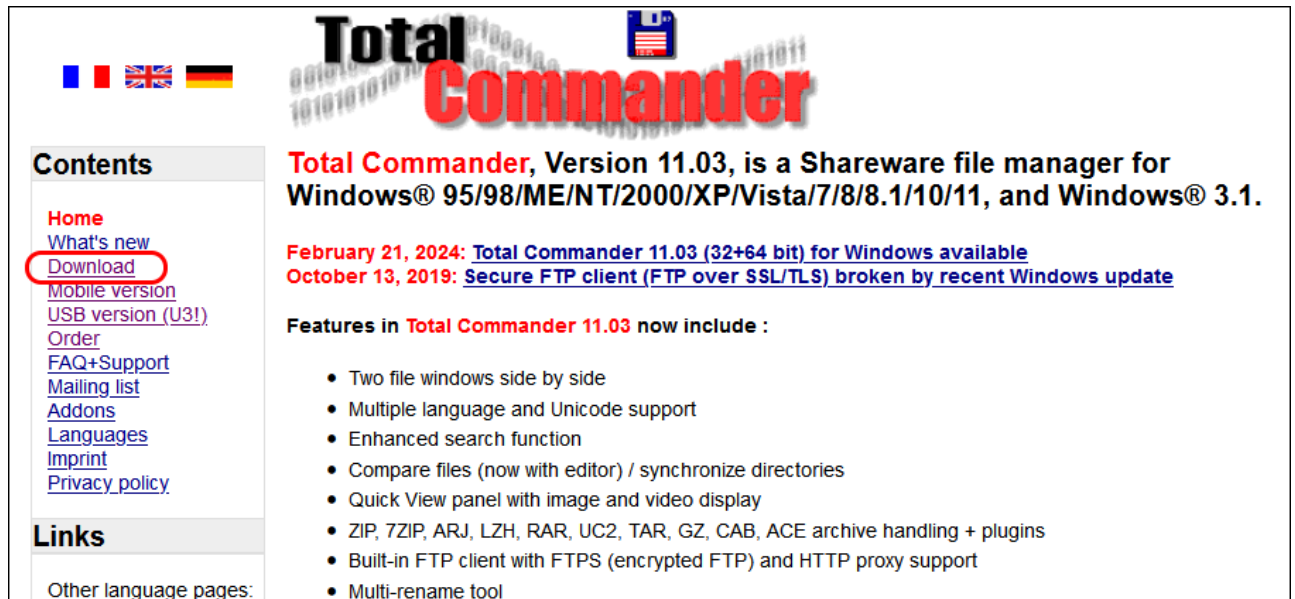
Installing and running Total Commander

by John Swale

Total Commander is a highly respected dual-panel file manager that is easy to install, as outlined in this presentation by John Swale.

Downloading Total Commander

The best source for downloading Total Commander is the developer's site at <https://www.ghisler.com>, with various versions available to accommodate different operating systems.



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Total Commander website. At the top, there are flags for France, the United Kingdom, and Germany. The main heading is "Total Commander" in a large, stylized font. Below the heading, it states: "Total Commander, Version 11.03, is a Shareware file manager for Windows® 95/98/ME/NT/2000/XP/Vista/7/8/8.1/10/11, and Windows® 3.1." There are two news items: "February 21, 2024: Total Commander 11.03 (32+64 bit) for Windows available" and "October 13, 2019: Secure FTP client (FTP over SSL/TLS) broken by recent Windows update". A list of features for version 11.03 is provided, including two file windows side by side, multiple language and Unicode support, enhanced search function, compare files, quick view panel, archive handling, built-in FTP client, and a multi-rename tool. A sidebar on the left contains a "Contents" menu with "Download" circled in red, and a "Links" section for other language pages.

Figure 21 – Total Commander website

Versions

- 32-bit version only (Windows 95 up to Windows 11, runs on 32-bit and 64-bit machines.)
- 64-bit version only (Windows XP up to Windows 11, runs only on 64-bit machines!)
- 64-bit+32-bit combined download (Windows 95 up to Windows 11, 32-bit and 64-bit machines.)
- PortableApps (installer for an existing installation on USB sticks)



The screenshot shows the download page of the Total Commander website. It features the same header as Figure 21. The main heading is "Download version 11.03 of Total Commander (fully functional Shareware version, 5MB EXE file):". Below this, it says "Direct download (RECOMMENDED):" and lists three options: "32-bit version only", "64-bit version only", and "64-bit+32-bit combined download". The "64-bit version only" option is circled in red, and a red arrow points from the circled "Download" link in the sidebar to this option. A "Mirrors:" section is also visible at the bottom.

Figure 22 – Total Commander download webpage

Installation

Most modern computers would require the 64-bit version and that was the one John downloaded and demonstrated. The downloaded file *tcmd1103x64.exe* was version 11.03 and is small by today's standards at only 6.2MB. Running the installation file generally follows the default settings as shown in the 5 installation windows shown in Figure 23 below. Apart from a few necessary choices the installation process is very quick.

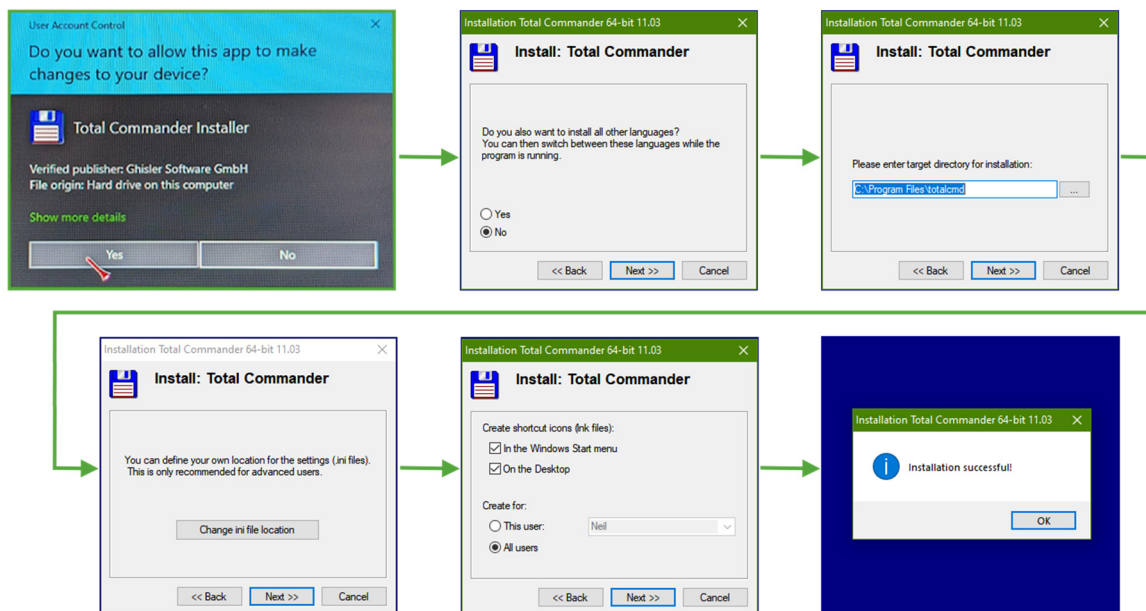


Figure 23 – Total Commander installation

Opening Total Commander

Upon opening Total Commander, a Program Information / Shareware Registration window initially blocks the main file manager window. To remove this window, the user must press one of three numbered buttons to proceed, encouraging registration of the program. Each time you restart Total Commander, this barrier window reappears, requiring you to press one of the labelled buttons to proceed. This process is required until the program is registered.

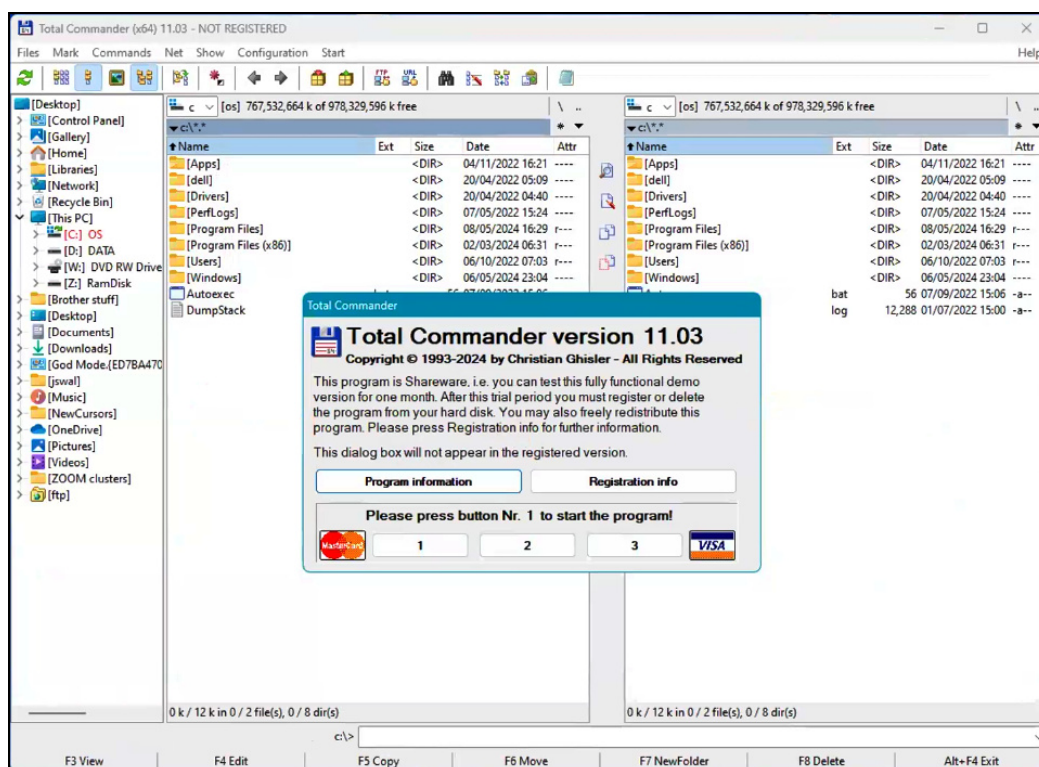


Figure 24 – Total Commander opening window

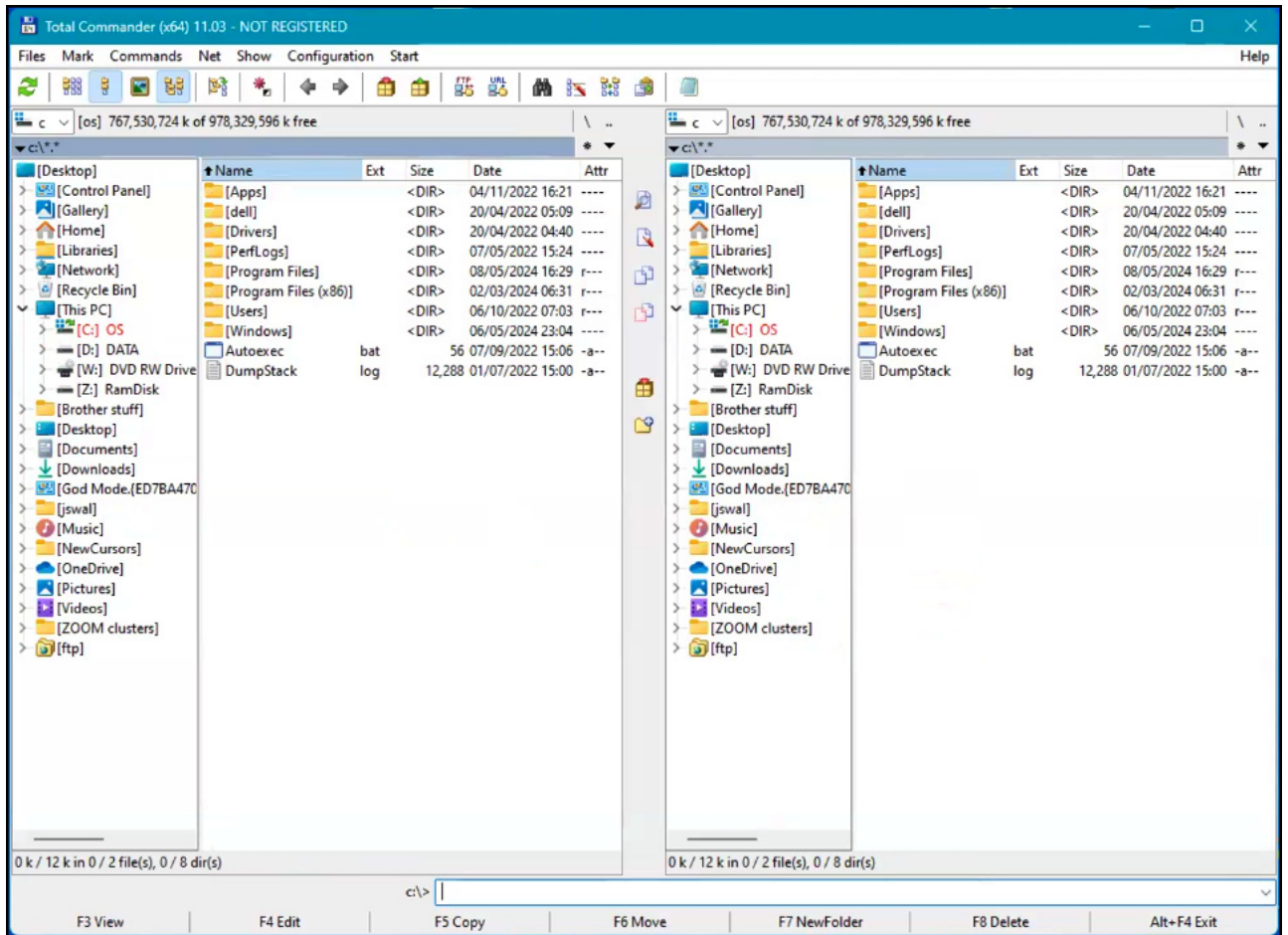


Figure 25 – Total Commander dual panel, Tree view

Registration

Total Commander is shareware and needs to be registered. A license can be purchased for one or multiple devices. As of the time of this presentation, the cost for a single license is A\$75.65, with payment options including credit card or PayPal. John considers this good value, especially for power users like Peter, who rely heavily on Total Commander.

Products				
	Delivery	Quantity	Unit price	Value
Total Commander - all versions (Volume discount prices)	Electronic	1	A\$ 68.77	A\$ 68.77
<i>The billing currency is AUD (A\$)</i>				
				Total price: A\$ 75.65
				Total GST (10%) : A\$ 6.88

Figure 26 – Total Commander registration

Overall, Total Commander is an easy to install file manager offering wide-ranging configuration options, making it a valuable tool for both casual and power users.

Clover - Tabbed folders in Windows 10

by Neil Muller

Continuing with the theme of favourite Windows file managers, Neil Muller presented his preferred choice, Clover.

Clover is based on Windows File Explorer and features tabbed folders and bookmark shortcuts. Neil finds he doesn't need a dual-panel file manager like Total Commander, but if necessary, running two instances of Clover can provide a similar dual-panel to Total Commander.

Early File Managers

To manage the data on Neil's PC, a quick and easy to use file manager was the main criterion. In the DOS era it was Xtree & XtreeGold.

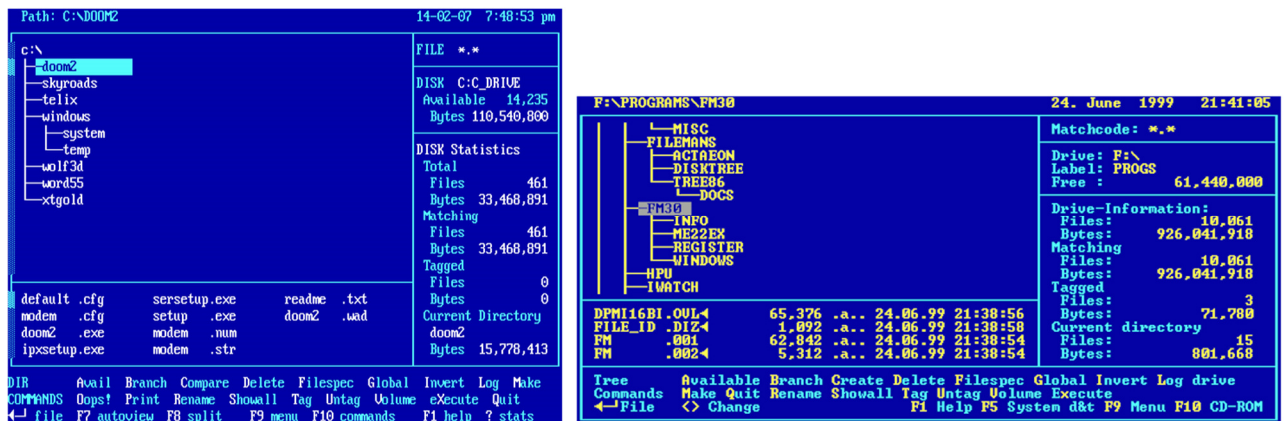


Figure 27 – Xtree for DOS

Windows File managers

- With the release of Windows 3 and 3.1, Windows File Manager as it was then called, complimented Xtree as Neil's go to file manager. When a dual panel file manager was needed, PowerDesk was the choice. PowerDesk looked like two instances of File Manager joined together.

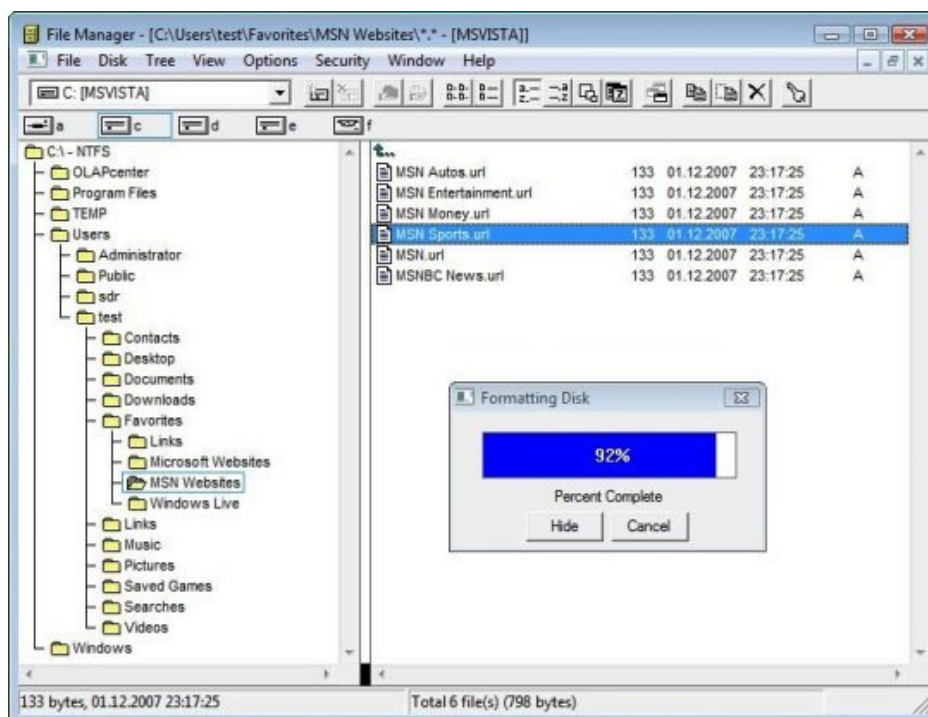


Figure 28 – File Manager Windows 3.1

- For Windows 95, 98, all the way through to XP, there were only minor tweaks to how Explorer looked and operated, until Windows 7 came along.

Windows 7

- Windows 7 introduced Libraries, a feature that grouped multiple actual folders on the disk to create a virtual container for a user's content or project. By default, Libraries contain Windows system folders: Documents, Music, Pictures, and Videos.
- Users can also create their own Library folders or virtual containers, which can include files and folders stored on the local computer.
- Neil found Libraries extremely useful for quickly accessing files for certain activities and used them extensively.
- Creating Libraries and adding folders to a Library was made easier with a freeware program called Librarian. While Libraries were very useful for certain tasks, most users ignored this new feature.

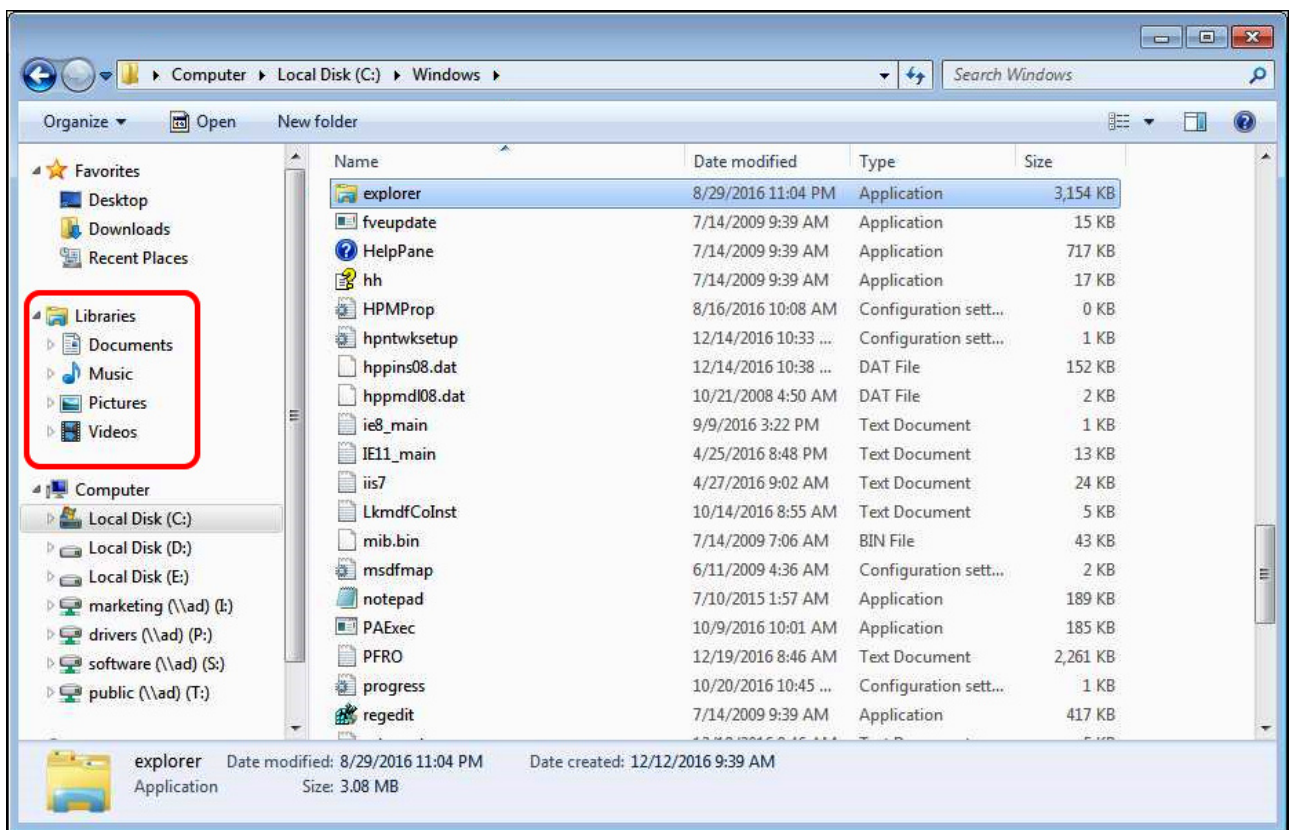


Figure 29 – Windows 7 File Explorer

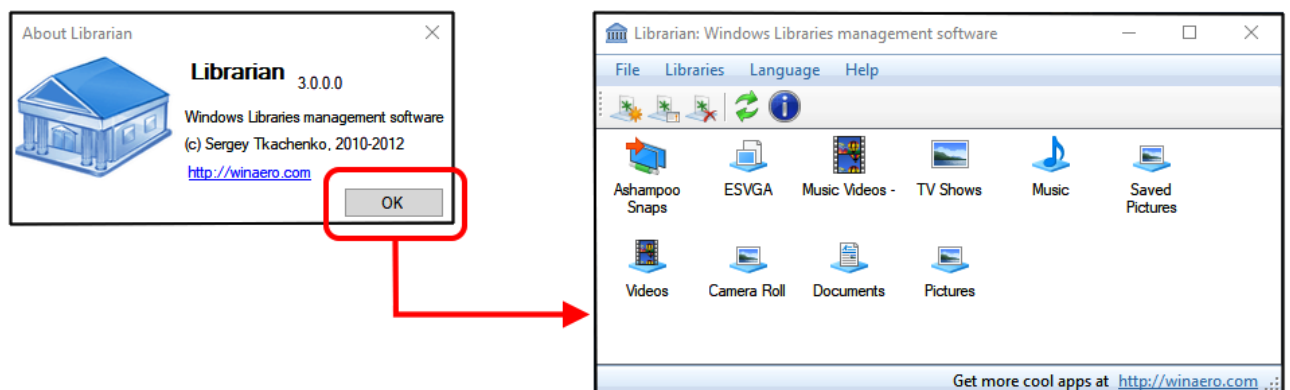


Figure 30 – Windows 7 Librarian

Windows 10

The arrival of Windows 10 brought two new and welcome features in Windows Explorer, which was later to be renamed File Explorer by MicroSoft. The first new feature was the Ribbon bar.

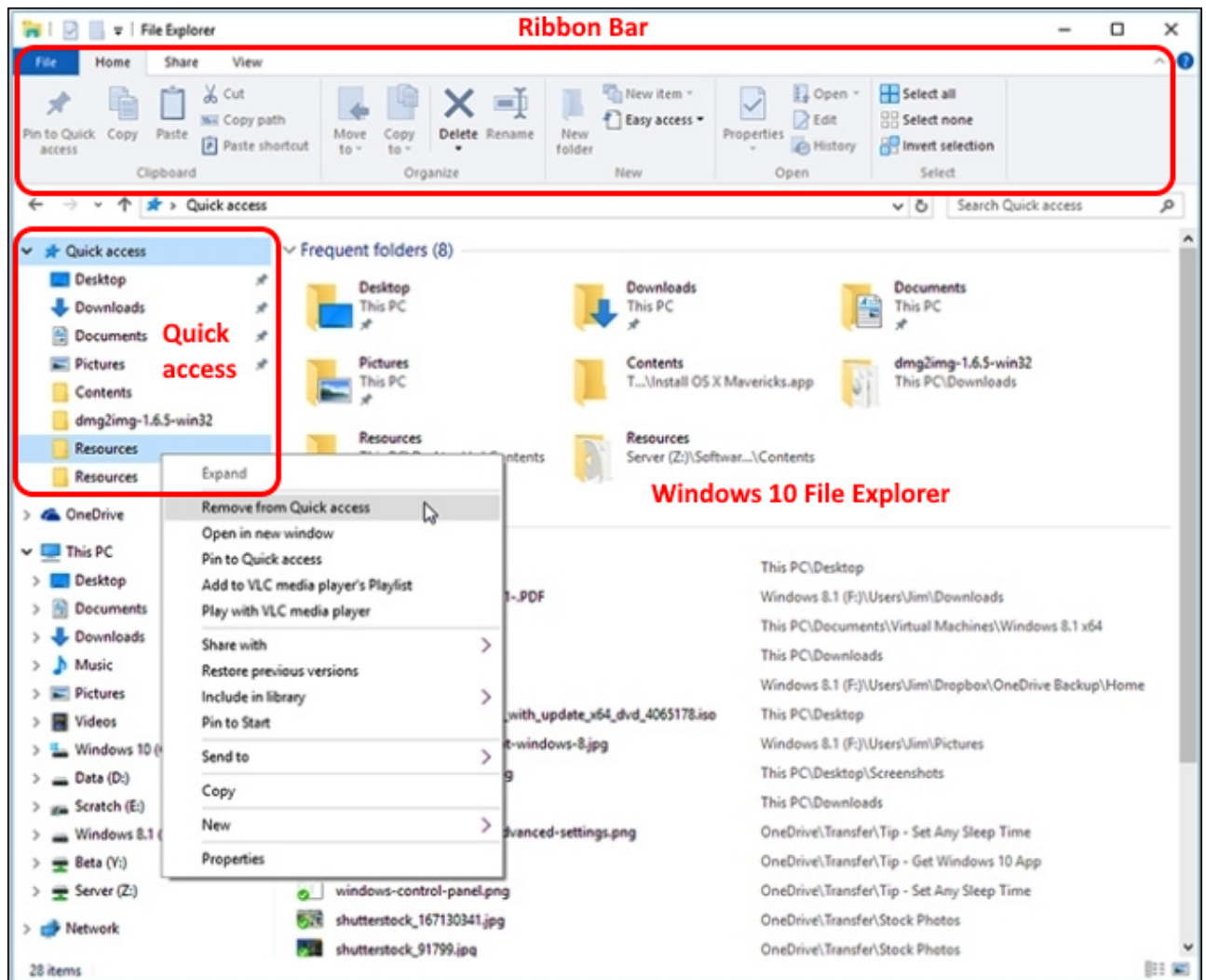


Figure 31 – Windows 10 File Explorer featuring a Ribbon bar and Quick access.

Ribbon bar

- The File Explorer Ribbon bar resembles the ribbon first featured in Microsoft Office. It contains buttons for common tasks you can perform with your files and folders. The Navigation Panel on the left gives you access to Libraries as well as your storage devices.
- The File Explorer Ribbon bar contains the File menu along with three tabs labelled:
 - *Home*: Provides access to the main file management commands.
 - *Share*: Offers options for sharing a selected item with others, including emailing, printing or faxing an item, burning it to a disk, and adding some security options.
 - *View*: Allows you choose between showing icons, lists, details, and more.

Quick access

The second new feature added to Windows 10 File Explorer was Quick access.

- Quick access replaced the Favorites section from earlier versions of Windows Explorer.
- When File Explorer is opened, Quick access appears in the left navigation column, above Libraries, OneDrive and your storage devices.
- You can add a file or folder to Quick Access by right-clicking it and selecting “Pin to Quick access”. To remove it, right-click and select “Unpin from Quick access”. This does not delete the folder from your computer, only the shortcut. Files and folders can be added and removed depending on your activity, making it easier to navigate and manage them.
- Quick access is a collection of shortcuts to the files and folders you use frequently, making it simple to find them. It provides a convenient way to access frequently used folders and recently accessed files.

Clover

- With the introduction of Quick Access, Neil stopped using Libraries, preferring Quick Access for its simplicity and speed.
- Around the time Windows 10 was released, tabbed file managers began to appear. Knowing that Quick Access was not a complete solution, Neil searched for a simple tabbed file manager. The answer came in October 2019 when Dave Botherway gave a presentation to East SIG and mentioned Clover.
- Clover seemed to be the perfect solution for Neil, so he gave it a try and hasn't looked back since.

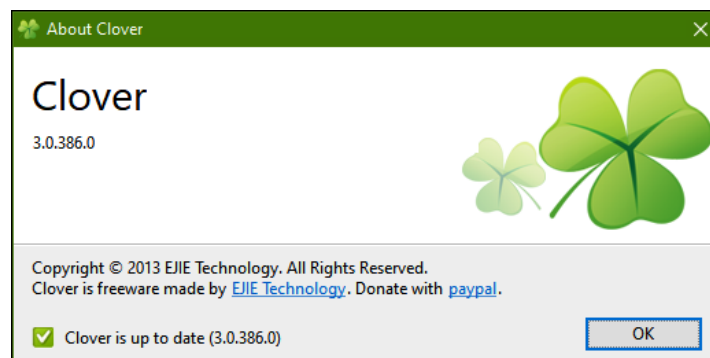


Figure 32 - About Clover, version information

What is Clover

- *Clover is not a file manager*, but an add-on to the Windows File Explorer. It's very simple to use because it's not a new program, so there's virtually no learning curve. Clover doesn't remove any features from your current Windows File Explorer. Clover works with Windows XP, Windows 7, Windows 8 & Windows 10.

Users should be aware that Clover replaces the File Explorer icon with a clover icon, but Clover is essentially File Explorer with added features. Don't search for File Explorer elsewhere on your computer, as you won't find it.

- *Clover adds 2 very useful features to Windows File Explorer.*
 - Firstly, Clover adds browser-style tabs to File Explorer. These tabs enhance file organisation and multitasking by allowing users to open multiple folders or directories in separate tabs within a single file manager window. This means you can switch between different locations without cluttering your desktop with multiple open windows.

- Secondly, Clover adds a handy bookmark bar for your most frequently accessed files and folders. As Neil later demonstrated, his bookmark bar contained many of his Quick Access shortcuts. The bookmark bar is more convenient than Windows Quick Access links because it is located directly below the tabs, requiring minimal mouse movement.

To create a new bookmark, simply hold and drag a file onto the bookmark bar. To remove a bookmark, right-click the bookmark and select delete.

- *Download Clover* from <http://en.ejie.me/>
- *Disadvantage*
 - The Clover website and software are available in English; however, the installer is in Japanese. English-speakers can easily follow along by clicking the green button and selecting the default options, as shown in Figure 33.
 - The latest version 3.5.4 has been flagged as containing PUPs (Potentially unwanted Programs) by VirusTotal. In his demonstration and screenshots included in this report, Neil is using version 3.0.386.0 without any issues.



Figure 33 – Clover installation screens

- *Reviews.*
A 28th March 2024 article on the TechRadar website, titled "Best File Manager of 2024," reviewed Windows file managers. The article rated file managers based on the criteria that "The best file managers make it simple and easy to manage your data in Windows in a better way than the default File Explorer." The ratings in five distinct categories are listed below, with Clover one of the best:
- Best file manager overall - **Total Commander**
Best file manager for power users – **Directory Opus**.
Best premium file manager, but with horizontal panels - **Xplorer²**.
Best file manager with multiple panes (4 panes are better than one) - **Q-Dir**
Best add-on alternative to a file manager – **Clover**

- The TechRadar article can be found at <https://www.techradar.com/best/the-best-file-manager>. The section of the article detailing the best file manager addon is shown below in Figure 34.

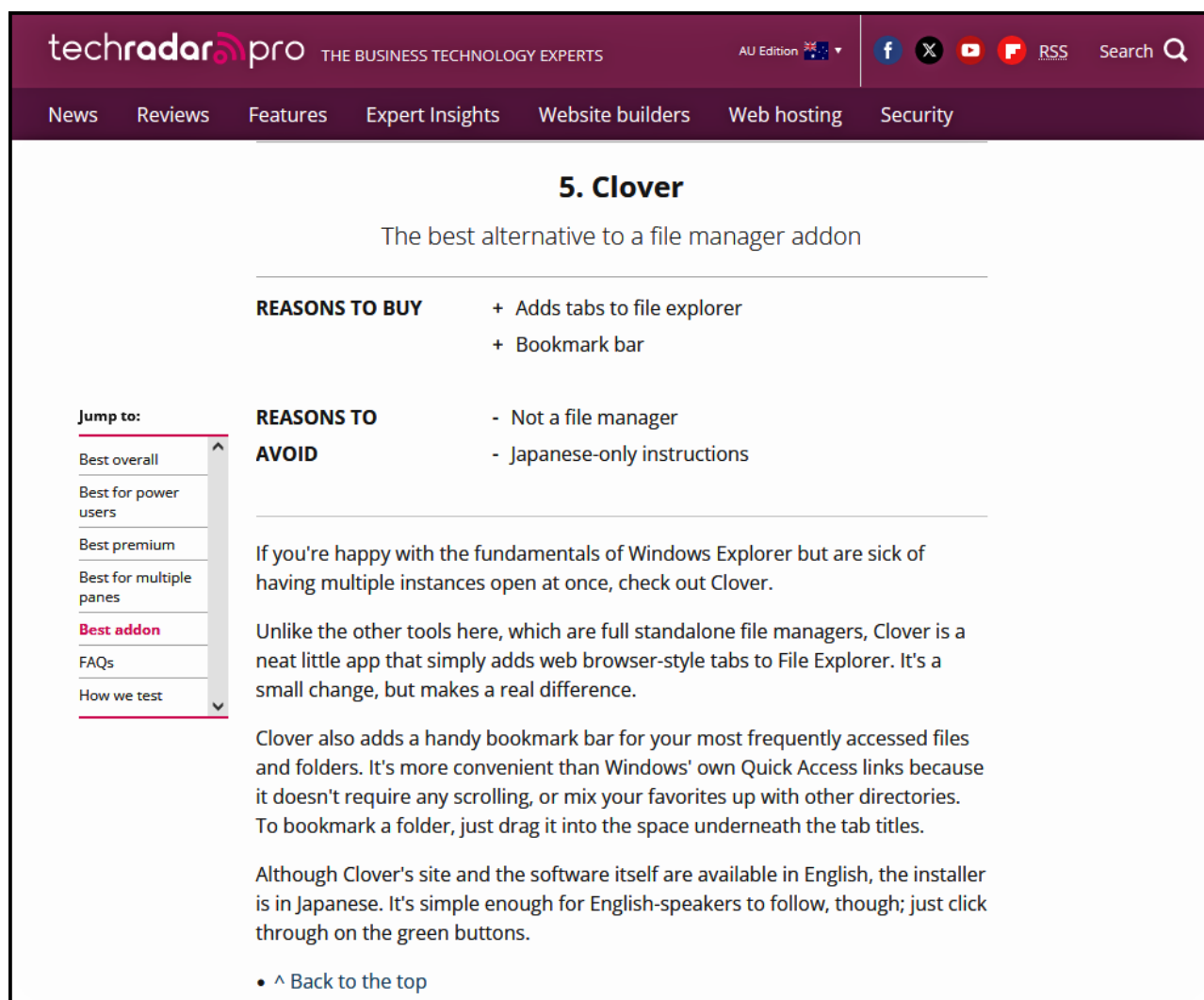


Figure 34 – TechRadar 2024 review

Features

Clover is very easy to use as it's an add-on to Window File Explorer. Users familiar with File Explorer and tabs in web browsers will feel comfortable using Clover right from the start.

- An Options menu, represented by a spanner icon at the top left of the Clover window, allows you to open a new tab or an easy way to open a new window for those wanting two-panel operation. Further options are available under Settings, but the default settings are generally sufficient. Neil noted that he rarely used the Options menu after the initial installation.
- To open a new tab
 - Click on the small folder shaped icon at the end of the tab bar.
 - Drag and drop the file onto the tab bar. (i.e. to drag, mouse click and hold)
 - Shortcut Ctrl + N
 - From the Options menu as outlined above
 - Tabs can be closed by clicking the x on the tab.

- To add shortcuts to the Bookmark bar
 - Drag and drop a file or folder onto the Bookmark bar.
 - To remove a bookmark, right click on it and select delete. This only deletes the bookmark and not the file.
 - Right click on the Bookmark bar for further options

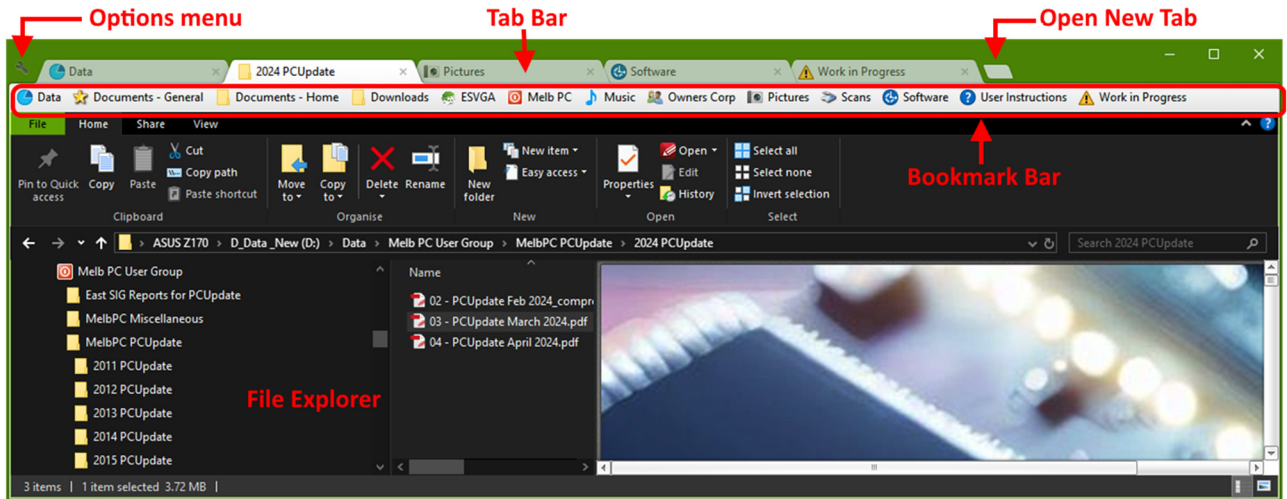


Figure 35 – Clover adds a Tab bar and Bookmark bar

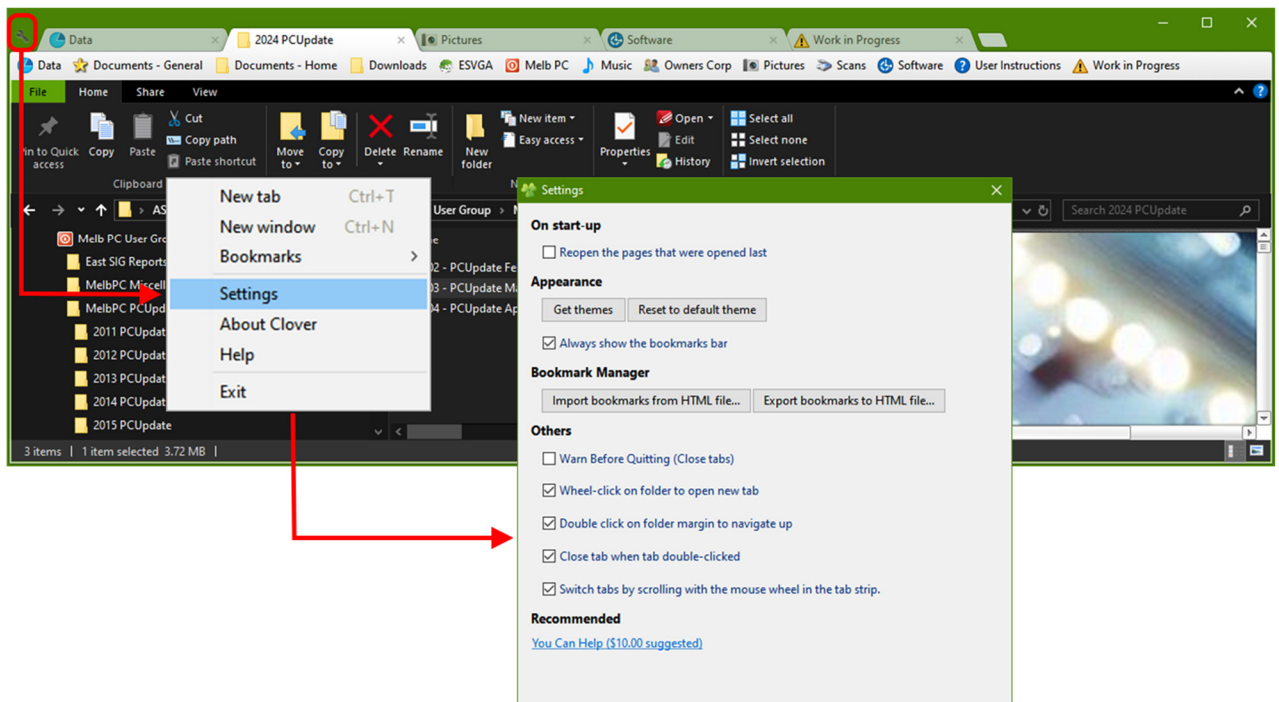


Figure 36 – Clover Option menu

- Tips
 - Adding your most used Quick Access items or a current project folder onto the Bookmark bar, is a quick way to open them when needed in a new tab with a short drag and drop to the Tab bar. This approach is a very quick and convenient way open a new tab in Clover.
 - To change the order of your tabs, drag a tab along the top of the Tab bar with your mouse.
 - To open a bookmark in the active tab (i.e. the tab that's current in view) simply click the bookmark for it to appear in that tab.
 - One of Clover's strengths is that it makes copying or moving files between tabs easy, following the traditional Windows File Explorer actions.
 - To copy or move files from an open tab, highlight the files or folders you want to transfer.
 - Click and hold the right mouse button on the highlighted files, then drag them to the target folder's tab on the tab bar.
 - Keep holding the mouse button down until the new folder opens, then move the cursor into the files area and release the mouse button.
 - This action will open a small window where you can select *Copy here* or *Move here*, as shown in Figure 37.

This technique for copying or moving files in Clover has eliminated Neil's need for a dual-panel file manager, although he has one installed, but rarely needs to use it.

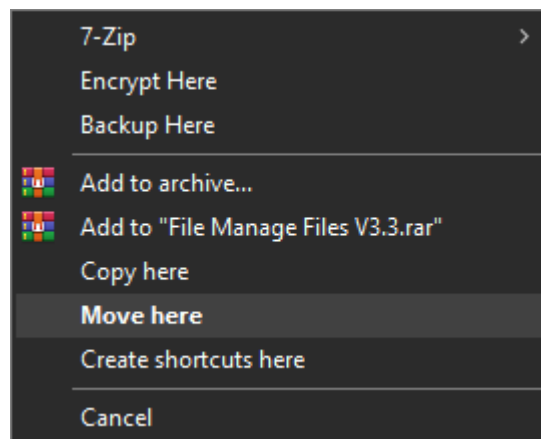


Figure 37 – Clover, Copy & Move menu

Summary

Clover simplifies file and folder management by using the familiarity of File Explorer. With its Tabbed interface and Bookmark bar, Clover has proven to be an excellent addition to Windows File Explorer. The combination of Quick Access and Clover enables Neil to work efficiently without the need for multiple instances of File Explorer open or a dual-panel file manager.