

What is an archive?

An archive is simply a collection of files stored in a single file. Nothing more, nothing less. There are different types of archives. Basically the functionality is exactly the same: You store several files in a single archive file. The difference is in the way the files are compressed. Different compression algorithms are used to create the different archive types. You can recognize the different archive types on the filename extension (the letters after the last dot in the filename).

What is a self-extracting (SFX) archive?

A self-extracting archive is an archive created as an executable file. This means that the receiver of the archive does not have to have a zip utility to extract files from it, he simply runs the archive file and is asked to select which files to extract. This will have the extension .exe

What are the benefits of using archives?

When you store documents and other types of files on your hard drive they are not optimized for size. Usually software vendors store them in a format that is fast to read, but on the other hand takes up a lot of space on your hard drive. Storing files in archives has several benefits:

If you have files you rarely use, you may save a lot of space on your hard drive by compressing them into an archive. Most Zip utilities let you view the files within the archive with a single click, so it does not involve a lot of extra work for you.

Easier file maintenance as you have a single archive file instead of maybe hundreds of small files.

Faster transmission of files over the Internet. Send the files faster, especially relevant if you or the recipient pays for online time when dialling the Internet to send or receive files.

This is a list of the commonest archive formats.

- .ace - Ace archive
- .arc - Alexa archive
- .arj - Arj archive
- .cab - Microsoft Cabinet
- .jar - JavaSoft archive
- .lha - Lha archive
- .lzh - Lzh archive
- .rar - Rar archive (the second commonest after zip)
- .zip - Zip archive (by far the commonest)
- .zoo - Zoo archive

A good explanation of how to download is given at

<http://www.goodsol.com/howtodown.html>