

File Size Units

File sizes tend to be one of the more perplexing issues for the both the fledgling and intermediate computer user. So, we've put together a breakdown of the various file size "units" you may encounter.

File Sizes

Bit- The smallest unit in computing. It can have a value of 1 or 0. You'd be hard pressed to find a file size listed in bits.

Byte - A (still small) unit of information made up of 8 bits.

Kilobyte(KB) - A unit of approximately 1000 bytes (1024 to be exact). Most download sites use kilobytes when they give file sizes.


Megabyte (MB) - A unit of approximately one million bytes (1,024 KB).


Gigabyte (GB) - Approximately 1 billion bytes (1024 MB). Most hard drive sizes are listed in gigabytes.


Application


OK, now for a little practical application.

 A 3 1/2" floppy drive holds 1.44 Megabytes (1,474 KB).

 A CD Rom holds 650 Megabytes (though most programs you get don't utilize the whole 650). This would be around 450 of those 3.5 floppies.

 A 20 Gig hard drive will hold the same amount of info as 31 CD ROMs or 14,222 of the 3.5 floppy disks.

 It takes between 7-10 minutes to download a one megabyte (1024 KB) file using the average dial up internet connection.

 A typical page of text is around 4KB.

To see the size of a given file, just right-click it (in Explorer or My Computer) and select Properties from the resulting menu.

I know that even with the information above, it can still be confusing, so I thought I would compare these digital units of measure to some everyday objects. Just picture them being completely hollow so you can store information in them.

Bit - Let's call this a regular sized marble.

Byte - Compared to the marble, this would be a baseball.

Kilobyte - Now we jump up to a pickup truck size.

Megabyte - Now for the leap - this would be a medium sized sky scraper.

Gigabyte - Take 1024 of the medium sized sky scrapers and stick them together for this one!

Well, hopefully that helps :-)
