















THE DOS AND DON'TS OF FILE NAMING

Adopting good practices for file naming prevents accidental overwrites or deletions, makes it easier to locate and access data, and prevents confusion if multiple people are working on shared files and folders.

-  Keep names short (≤ 25 characters).
-  Choose names using 3-4 key unchanging pieces of information.
-  Use YYYY-MM-DD format for better sorting even over the span of many years.
-  All numeric fields should be zero-padded for equivalent width.
-  For better visibility, give preference to dashes over underscores.
-  Create a README.txt describing the file naming convention.
-  Add tags to files properties to enhance their findability in your workspace.
-  Be consistent!
-  Do not add spaces! They are often interpreted as delimiters and may cause problems.
-  Do not include special characters such as: " / \ [] : ; | = , < ? > & \$ # ! ' { } () *.
-  Do not rely on case to distinguish filenames. Not all systems are case-sensitive.
-  Avoid unnecessary repetition in file names and file paths.
-  Avoid using words such as 'draft' or 'letter' at the start of file and folder names.
-  If files will be shared and edited by multiple people, avoid naming multiple versions. Consider using a version control system such as Git instead.

Want to learn more about how you can apply these and other tips to develop a more effective file naming convention to your projects?

Schedule a consultation with us:

rds@library.ucsb.edu