Research Data Management at Princeton

| Search

- Home
- **Data Management Plans**
- **Data Types and Formats**
- **File naming and structure**
  - File naming
  - File structure
- **Data Capture and Documentation**
- **Storage, Backup, and Security**
- **Ethics and Intellectual Property**
- **Sharing and Preservation**
- **Data Citation**
- **Additional Resources**
- **Works Cited**

File naming

Descriptive file names are an important part of organizing, sharing, and keeping track of data files. Develop a naming convention based on elements that are important to the project.

File naming best practices:

- Files should be named consistently
- File names should be short but descriptive (<25 characters) (Briney)
- Avoid special characters or spaces in a file name
- Use capitals and underscores instead of periods or spaces or slashes
- Use date format ISO 8601: YYYYMMDD
- Include a version number (Creamer et al.)
- Write down naming convention in data management plan

Elements to consider using in a naming convention are:

- Date of creation (putting the date in the front will facilitate computer aided date sorting)
- Short Description
- Work
- Location
- Project name or number
- Sample
- Analysis
- Version number

Example

YYYYMMDD_Image_Modification
   20130420_tina_original.tiff
   20130420_tina_cropped.jpeg
   20130420_tina_mustache.jpeg

LocationAnalysisVersion
   CarnegieLakeWordCloudV1
   CarnegieLakeMapV1
   CarnegieLakeMapV2

- Research Data Mantra
  For more on file naming, including batch renaming tools, visit the Research Data Management Training module on organizing data from the University of Edinburgh.
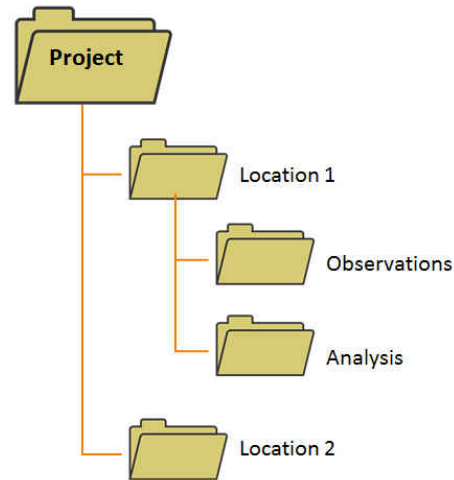
Ask Us

File structure

Heirarchical file structures can add additional organization to your files. As with file naming use whatever makes most sense for your data. Some possiblities include:

- Project
- Date
- Analysis
- Location

Example

For more on file structure, versioning, and a bonus preview of metadata and documentation, watch the Software Carpentry video on Data management

---

Last Updated: Aug 2, 2019 2:05 PM | **URL:** https://libguides.princeton.edu/rdm | 🖶 Print Page

Ask Us