

How to Name Your Files.



LAS 6292: Data Collection & Management

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In Your files you will learn:

(1) How to **organize** them

(2) how to **store** them

(3) How to keep them **safe**



Lesson 1: File names are really important.

Really important.

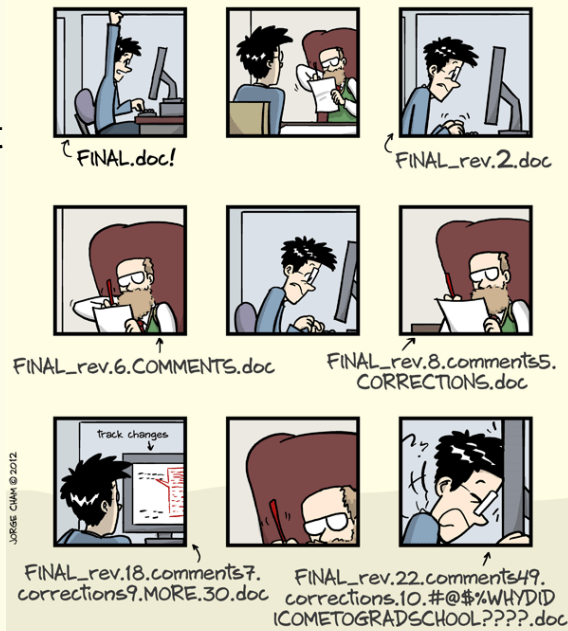
Yes...really.

(I'm serious.)

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It's so important that
www.phdcomics.com
 made a cartoon about it

"FINAL".doc

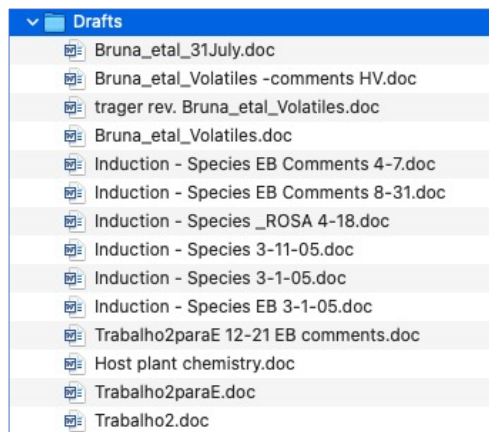


It's
 funny
 because
 it's true.

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It's funny because it's true.

These are examples of files found on Emilio's computer:



These are
 different drafts
 of the same
 manuscript.



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Example 2

AF_Biodiversity_-_Biotopica_-_Review3_Last_FINAL

Apparently not.

AF_Biodiversity_-_Biotopica_-_Review3_Last_FINAL_EBEdits



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Example 3.

DO NOT USE-Costa et al MS 1 (Ch2)

This sounds...scary.

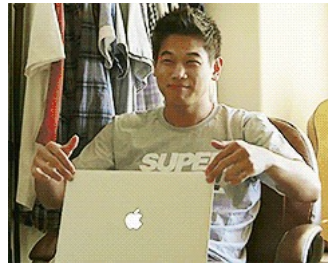


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Example 4



We've all been there.



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The first (and easiest) step to well-managed data:

File and folder names that are **simple, clear, & consistent**.

- Files will be **easier to find**
No more opening files to see the contents



- Files will be **easier to organize**
Files will sort in chronological order



- Files will be **more secure**
prevent accidental overwriting or deletion



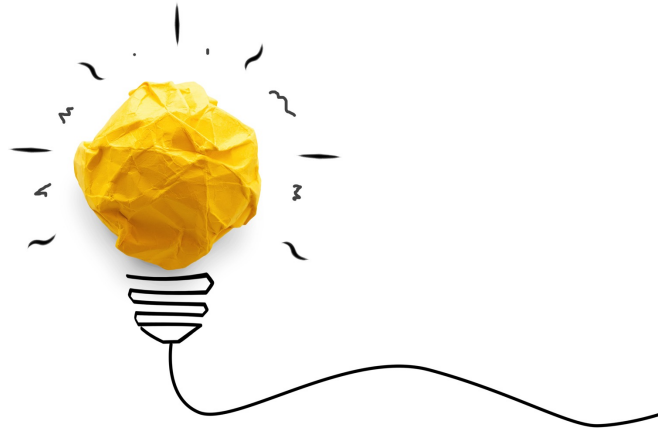
- Files will be **easier to share**
Ensures use of the most recent version



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How should you name files?

Here are 6 things to remember.



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1. Use a name that describes and uniquely identifies the file contents

Example 1

`'data'`

No.

Example 2

`'data'`

`'survey data'`

Still no.

`'interviews'`

`'survey data 1998'` A little better.... `'interviews 1998'`

`'mammal survey 1998'`

Good.

`'teacher interviews 1998'`

You can use descriptors like these in the name:
project acronym, location where data were collected,
researcher name, year or month collected, type of data in file

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2. Keep names as short as possible

< 25 characters

3. Avoid using spaces & special characters*:

\$ % ^ & # | : , ;

4. Start with letters, never numbers

1998_data No.

data_1998 Yes!

**computer programs interpret these characters as special instructions, spaces, or breakpoints*

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5. Include dates in names (but be careful!)

4-3-2021 means different things in different places.



This can lead to major problems when collaborating internationally or when team members use versions of software from different global regions

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Use file names with dates in standard format (ISO 8601)

YYYYMMDD or YYYY-MM-DD

census_data_20210403









Before long your files will look like this.

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BONUS

In addition to avoiding confusion, you can now quickly sort files chronologically

Characters are read and sorted in order, so files with "4 April" in the name will be sorted after those with "5 April", *regardless of the year....*

Name
 census_data_5-april-2017.csv
 census_data_5-april-2018.csv
 census_data_4-april-2017.csv
 census_data_4-april-2018.csv
 census_data_3-april-2017.csv
 census_data_3-april-2018.csv

...but not when you use ISO format, which puts the year *first*.

Name
 census_data_20180405.csv
 census_data_20180404.csv
 census_data_20180403.csv
 census_data_20170405.csv
 census_data_20170404.csv
 census_data_20170403.csv

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And finally...

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6. Use a consistent method of dealing with spaces and letter case.

There are two preferred options:

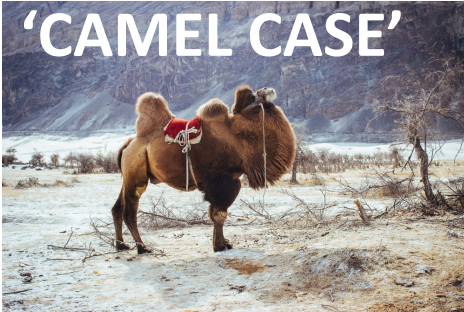


OR



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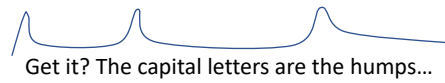
Option 1



'survey responses Florida'

becomes

'SurveyResponsesFlorida'



Get it? The capital letters are the humps...

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Option 2

'survey responses Florida'

becomes

'survey_responses_Florida' or

'survey_responses_florida' or

'survey-responses-florida'



Get it? the spaces are the potholes...



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I recommend Pothole Case *without* caps.
(that way you never have to remember what words are supposed to be capitalized)

Use either hyphens...
'survey-responses-florida'

...or underscores
'survey_responses_florida'



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Develop your system.

Write it down.

Stick to it.

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Sticking to it can be challenging at first, but it's worth the effort.

It will reduce your stress and allow you to work more efficiently. Trust me.

You can do it!

The Microsoft stock photo images for 'excited' all believe in you.



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

































PS:

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It's never too late, even if you have lots of files to rename.

There are **tools** to help you do this quickly.

See the class notes for a list.

 IMG_1185.jpg	 IMG_5233.jpg	 IMG_5628.jpg
 IMG_1186.jpg	 IMG_5234.jpg	 IMG_5629.jpg
 IMG_1187.jpg	 IMG_5235.jpg	 IMG_5630.jpg
 IMG_1188.jpg	 IMG_5237.jpg	 IMG_5631.jpg
 IMG_1189.jpg	 IMG_5239.jpg	 IMG_5632.jpg
 IMG_1190.jpg	 IMG_5243.jpg	 IMG_5633.jpg
 IMG_1191.jpg	 IMG_5244.jpg	 IMG_5634.jpg
 IMG_1192.jpg	 IMG_5245.jpg	 IMG_5635.jpg
 IMG_1193.jpg	 IMG_5248.jpg	 IMG_5636.jpg
 IMG_1194.jpg	 IMG_5250.jpg	 IMG_5637.jpg
 IMG_1195.jpg	 IMG_5251.jpg	 IMG_5638.jpg
 IMG_1196.jpg	 IMG_5252.jpg	 IMG_5639.jpg
 IMG_1197.jpg	 IMG_5261.jpg	 IMG_5640.jpg

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Fin.

Photos: Unsplash or EM Bruna
Music: www.bensound.com

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