



# *Research Data Management*

## FILE NAMES

### FILE NAMES SHOULD BE MACHINE READABLE, HUMAN READABLE, AND PLAY WELL WITH DEFAULT ORDERING

- ☐ Check for established file naming conventions in your discipline or in your group. Naming conventions should be documented so that others in your lab or department can follow this standard.
- ☐ File names should be descriptive and provide just enough contextual information.
- ☐ Try not to make file names too long. Operating systems have different limits to the number of characters. As a general rule, try to aim for a 40-50 character limit.
- ☐ Put the most important information first. The computer arranges files by name, character by character. If you anticipate wanting to find a file by date, then put the date first.
- ☐ Use ISO 8601 standard for date (YYYYMMDD). To add a timestamp to your filename, use the format YYYYMMDDThhmm. Use 24-hour military time to avoid any confusion over a.m./p.m.
- ☐ When using a sequential numbering system, use leading zeros to make sure files sort in sequential order. Example: 001, 002, ...010, 011 ... 100, 101 ...
- ☐ Use versioning to indicate the most current version of a file. Example: filename\_v2.xxx
- ☐ Avoid special characters, such as: ~ ! @ # \$ % ^ & \* ( ) ` ; : < > ? . , [ ] { } ' " |
- ☐ Do not use spaces as some software will not recognize file names with spaces. Other options include underscores, dashes, no separation, or camel case (first letter of each section of text is capitalized).

File Name	[investigator]_[method]_[subject]_[YYYYMMDD]_[version].[ext]
Convention	[project #]_[method]_[version]_[YYYYMMDD].[ext]
Examples:	[YYYYMMDD]_[version]_[subject]_[datacollector].[ext]
	[type of file]_[author]_[date].[ext]



20190102\_ac\_smithlab\_utra\_exp01\_gel\_003.tiff  
20190501\_exp123\_analysis\_v01.pdf  
20190811\_bioassay\_toxicity\_V1.sps  
2020-plos-manuscript-v26.pdf



Test data 2016.xlsx  
Meeting notes Jan 17.doc  
Notes Eric.txt  
Final FINAL last version.docx