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Organising your data

These slides explain how you can organise your data to best effect. You should make sure that your data has:

- **Good, informative filenames.** Think about making sure that you never have two files with the same name, and that your files are clearly labelled with versions and dates. If you use an autosave feature, consider saving your file with a new version number before you make any significant changes.

- **A logical folder structure.** Make sure you have a copy of your raw data saved separately from your working copy, to avoid the risk of editing it by accident. Whenever you process data, make a new folder that contains the processed data. Include Readme files that explain the file naming convention for each folder and how the data was obtained or processed.

If you have any questions about file naming, you can visit the Research Data Management web pages or contact us at research-datamanagement@glasgow.ac.uk.

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File names allow you to identify a precise experiment or dataset from the name. Choose a format for naming your files and use it consistently.

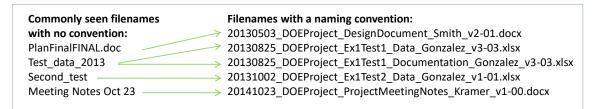Good file names are relatively short, but rich in information.
Good file names consist of information elements separated by underscores '_'

Examples of elements:
- Project or experiment name of acronym
- Location / spatial coordinates
- Researcher name / initials
- Date or date range of data acquisition
  Type of data
- Conditions
- Version number of file
- File extension

Top tips:
- Avoid special characters
- Do not use spaces
- Use an underscore as an element delimiter
- Use a hyphen or capital to delimit words within an element
- Think about the order of elements
- Use standard conventions eg YYYYMMDD
- Abbreviate where possible

Commonly seen filenames with no convention:
PlanFinalFINAL.doc
Test_data_2013
Second_test
Meeting Notes Oct 23

Filenames with a naming convention:
20130503_DOEProject_DesignDocument_Smith_v2-01.docx
20130825_DOEProject_Ex1Test1_Data_Gonzalez_v3-03.xlsx
20130825_DOEProject_Ex1Test1_Documentation_Gonzalez_v3-03.xlsx
20131002_DOEProject_Ex1Test2_Data_Gonzalez_v1-01.xlsx
20141023_DOEProject_ProjectMeetingNotes_Kramer_v1-00.docx

Explain your file-naming convention in your documentation!

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Readme.txt
1. What is data?
2. How was data acquired?
3. What software is needed to open?
4. What is the file-naming convention?
5. Anything else useful? eg sample prep

Raw data

Do not touch

Working copy

Readme.txt
1. Where has data come from?
2. How has data been processed?
3. What software is needed to open?
4. What is the file-naming convention?
5. Anything else useful?

Processed data Version 1

Processed data Version 2

Processed data Subset for figure

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