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Quick guide #3 – File management

File formats need to be stable and suitable for the dataset, avoiding types which are restricted to operating systems or that use proprietary formats.

It is useful to consider file formats when planning the project, so you can choose the best formats to use for each project stage and for long-term preservation of the archive.

When considering long-term accessibility and usability of research data, sustainable digital file formats and software will be needed.

The trusted digital repository will have guidance on which formats to use and which file types can be accepted into the archive.

Filenames should be informative, containing contextual information about the file and subject.

Using a consistent, logical and predictable naming convention within an organisation will help to distinguish similar records from one another instantly, facilitating the storage and retrieval of records.

An organisational file naming policy can be applied consistently across projects using a format that will meet repository requirements.

Version control will mean that everyone is clear what file they need and which version to use. A version control strategy considers when and how versions are numbered and can include document control and version history.

Dig Digital quick guide #1 – Data management plans
https://www.archaeologists.net/digdigital

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Working project archive - folder structure

Having a well organised and logical file structure for your Working Project Archive will make it easier to find and keep track of data files.

Conventions for data file structures can be introduced at an organisational level to ensure the project team of any project will know how to find relevant files. Folder structures should be simple, clear and make sense to users. Using shared file storage systems means all users can access the same files, but will require shared processes to keep everything well organised.

When organising files and folders, structures should also account for the complexity of different data types (such as geophysical data, GIS, and photogrammetry), including high volume files, relationships between files and links with external systems and data.

Find out more about files and folders

- File formats — UK Data Service
- Versioning — UK Data Service
- Organising — UK Data Service
- Naming conventions | The University of Edinburgh

ADS also have guidance as part of deposition guidance and good practice information:

- Guides to Good Practice: CreateData 1-0 (archaeologydataservice.ac.uk)
- Archaeology Data Service: preparing datasets