
FILENAME GUIDELINES



BEST PRACTICE



WHAT TO AVOID



TIPS



EXAMPLES

FILENAME GUIDELINES

BEST PRACTICE RULES

1. MEANINGFUL

It may seem obvious, but is still worth mentioning that ideally, **filenames should indicate the file content**. For automatically generated names such as camera files, renaming may not be desirable. In this case, ensure the containing folder names identify the content.

2. CONCISE

Don't go too long in names or deep in folders. Shorter names are easier to scan and length limits are built in to all operating systems. Windows has a limit of 260 characters for the whole filepath (including folder names). To be safe, keep your **total filepath character length to under 230** with **folder names at 35 characters or less**.

3. NO SPECIAL CHARACTERS

Don't use carriage returns, punctuation or non-English characters. No periods, period! Some systems tolerate them but others complain loudly because they expect a file extension to follow directly after. Avoid spaces if possible. Capitals, hyphens - and underscores _ can be used instead. But **never place hyphens, underscores or spaces at the start or end of a file or folder name**.

WHAT TO AVOID

SPECIAL CHARACTERS - DO NOT USE:

@ % & ' " : ; ? / \ - < > * { [()] }
 á (non-English) • (period) ↵ (Carriage return)

AVOID 'FLOATING':

Using periods or underscores to 'float' a folder to the top when sorting alphabetically can cause problems for DAM systems and colleagues, who may overlook .Pictures or _Pictures in a search for Pictures.

WHAT TO DO

TO ENSURE CROSS-PLATFORM COMPATIBILITY:

Safe characters:

Standard Alphanumeric Underscore__ Hyphen -

Length: Keep total filepath under **230 characters** as best practice to account for Operating System limits and software overhead.

TIPS

UNIQUENESS

Keeping filenames unique may aid identification and reduces the risk of accidentally saving over files.

VERSION CONTROL

Version numbers, dates and author initials are methods to keep files unique and assist identification.

SORTING

Consider formatting dates so that they sort alphabetically, for example - YYYYMMDD.

ABBREVIATIONS

Use of abbreviations can affect searchability. Agree on their use in advance, and keep it consistent.

LEADING ZEROES

Decide on an appropriate number of leading zeroes for sequential numbering systems, e.g. v001, to ensure files sort alphabetically.

EXAMPLES

Where camera generated files are placed after the following structure:

GOOD

\\My_drive_name\client\project_name\rushes\day_1\camera_A\ (58 Char.)

\\My-drive-name\Client\Project-Name\Rushes\Day-1\Camera-A\ (58 Char.)

\\MyDriveName\Client\ProjectName\Rushes\Day\CameraA\ (54 Char.)

POOR

\\My external drive for archiving projects\A very long project @ a far away place\this project is for my client\my client name is ACME\my project name is Project 375a\project rushes\rushes day 1\Camera A\ (205 Char.)

LEARN MORE

OS X Cross platform filename best practices and conventions: <https://support.apple.com/en-au/HT202808>
 Microsoft: <https://msdn.microsoft.com/en-au/library/windows/desktop/aa365247.aspx>

USE NOTE

These guidelines have been put together to assist organisations without naming conventions in place. Your unique requirements may differ, so please only use as appropriate.

For any assistance or queries please contact: storeit@preferredmedia.com.au or call **02 9490 7300**