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Electronic Records Naming Conventions

A RECORDS MANAGEMENT OFFICE GUIDELINE

Introduction

This document is a companion document to Electronic Records Management Guidelines (GUI-0002). The purpose of these two documents is to help units to:

- Organize shared drives and content management systems

- Name documents in a manner that is consistent and efficient

Units must ensure that the records under their care are secure, authentic, and reliable. Multiple documents stored on shared drives, or in systems such as SharePoint, can become unruly quickly. Without a naming convention it is difficult for users to determine the revision status and whether the record has been acted upon. All records should be named consistently with a method for naming that is documented, shared, and agreed upon by the unit.

Document Naming Checklist – A Quick Guide

- ✓ Seek agreement on the order of the elements that will make up the filename

- ✓ Separate elements using an underscore

- ✓ Separate revision status on documents by using an underscore

- ✓ Use letter code when drafting (A, B, C) and use numbers starting with 0 when the document is final

- ✓ When sending a final document by email, save and send it as a PDF rather than the native file

- ✓ Use tags or keywords in the properties of the document

- ✓ Always include the file path in the footer information

Naming Elements

The name of the document is made up of elements that when brought together will form the filename. The filename should also appear in the footer information. Using naming elements is beneficial because once staff become familiar with the agreed upon naming convention its use efficiently relays a lot of information.

Key elements include:

- Project or account number

- Subject or activity (required)

- Document form

- Date (required if not using revision

- Revision (required if not using date)

Element Overview

A sample title using all the elements is shown below:

RMProject_RiskManagement_GUI_20150414_Rev0.pdf

The document's name tells the reader that the document is a Records Management project proposal document, created for Risk Management dated April 14, 2015, and that it's both final and acted upon.

The name can be further broken down like so:

Subject	Faculty/Dept/Unit Identifier [optional]	Document Form	Date	Revision	File Extension
RMProject_	RiskManagement_	GUI_	YYYYMMDD_	Rev0	.pdf

Document Form

Use one of the abbreviations below to identify the document form. If you require a new abbreviation, please email us and we will add it to the template.

ACT	Action Request	LTR	Letter
AGD	Agenda	MEM	Memo (internal)
AGR	Agreement	MIN	Minutes
ANN	Announcement	MNL	Manual
APP	Appendix	MTG	Meeting
ART	Article	NSL	Newsletter
BIO	Biography	PLN	Plan
BRC	Brochure	PMT	Permit
BRN	Briefing Note	POL	Policy
CHT	Chart	PPR	Paper
CON	Contract	PRC	Procedure
COV	Cover Page	PRF	Profile
DFT	Discussion Draft	PRO	Proposal
DRT	Directory	PRS	Presentation
DWG	Drawing	PRL	Press Release
ETD	Electronic Thesis and Dissertation	PST	Poster
EXA	Example	RPT	Report
FCT	Fact Sheet	RVW	Review
FRM	Form	SCH	Schedule
GRA	Grant	SPE	Speech

GUI	Guidelines	SRY	Survey
INT	Interview	SUM	Summary
INV	Invoice	SUP	Supplement
INX	Index	TML	Timeline
LCT	Lecture	TOR	Terms of Reference
LGL	Legal Document	YRB	Yearbook

Date Standard

When dating the document, use the ISO Standard (ISO 8601) format for dates:

YYYYMMDD (no dashes between year, month, or day)

The Date element can be replaced with a sequence number where warranted, especially in cases where many of the same document type exist and the addition of the date would not make the document title unique. For example:

RMProject_RiskManagement_PRO_0001_Rev0.pdf
RMProject_RiskManagement_PRO_0002_Rev0.pdf
RMProject_RiskManagement_PRO_0003_Rev0.pdf

Date information would need to be displayed in the document's metadata and on the document itself. This method is best used with a document register in an excel spreadsheet or database.

Revision Status[1]

It should always be clear when a document is in drafting mode and when it has been finalized and acted upon. This is achieved through two steps:

1. By adding the revision element (letters for drafting and numbers for final) separated by an underscore when naming the document, as illustrated in the Element Overview

2. Saving the document as a PDF so no more changes can be made to the document

Revision Details

DRAFT REVISIONS (Letters)	
A	Initial draft sent for review
B	Official draft sent for external or internal review
C	Next incarnation of official draft sent for internal or external review
FINAL REVISIONS (Numbers)	
0	First final revision
DRAFT AFTER FINAL HAS BEEN PRODUCED (Number followed by Letter)	

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[1] This revision status was inspired by a similar method in place at WorleyParsons Engineering.

0A, 0B, 0C, etc.	Drafts after final has been produced, next **final issue** will be a **number only**
FINAL REVISION	
1	Next revision after final

If a record goes back to drafting after the final has been produced, the revision number remains along with a drafting letter. Following drafting, the document will move to the next consecutive number. For example:

| FILE NAME	REVISION INFORMATION
RMProject_RiskManagement_GUI_20150420_Rev0A.docx	Finalized document that has gone back to drafting
RMProject_RiskManagement_GUI_20140426_Rev1.docx	Final document

Units can define for themselves the order in which they want to place the elements – date is often chosen to be represented first – but we suggest following the order outlined in the Element Overview:

RMProject_RiskManagement_GUI_20140414_Rev0.pdf

Keep the subject simple and capitalize the first word if using multiple words – this is a technique called CamelCase. Do not use all-caps except for acronyms.

Document File Path

The file path should always be displayed in the footer of a document. Doing so will tell the user how to find the native file of document again should the document be printed and the revision status.
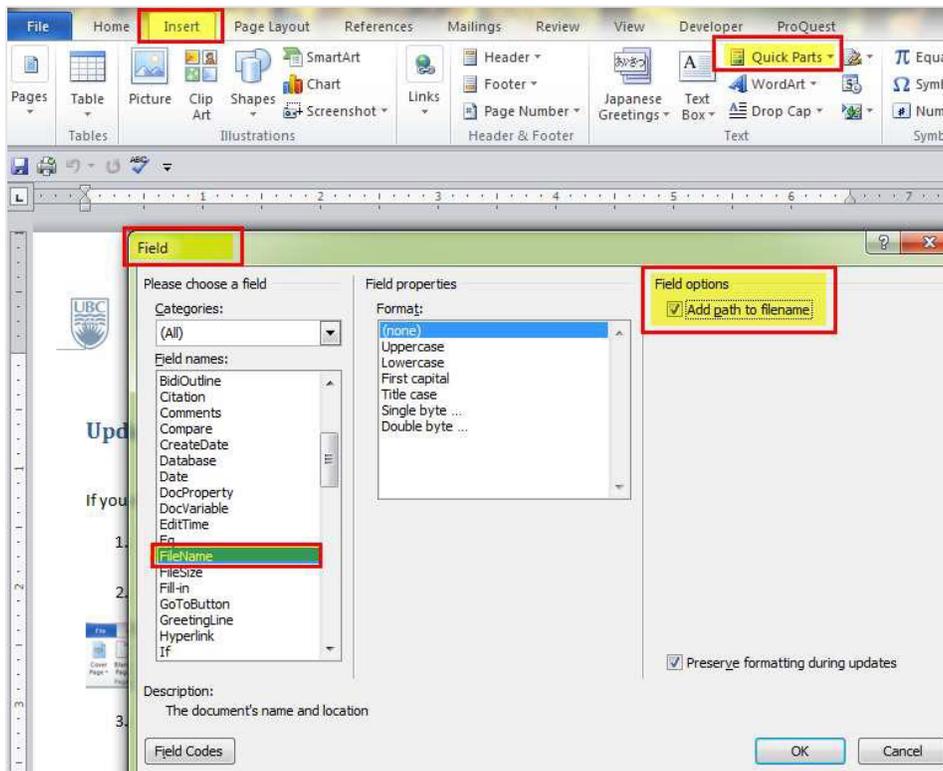
To insert filepath into document footer choose: **Insert** > **Quick Parts** > **Field** to bring up a dialog box. Scroll through the **Field Names** to select **FileName** and then check **Add path to file.** To update the footer, choose **F9**>**enter**

Principles for Naming Emails

Seek agreement within your unit as to how emails will be named. Use the naming standards defined in this document where possible. At the very least, separate the subject line into elements separated by dashes starting with general and move to specific. Subject lines should be kept as short as possible. There is a 255-character limit when storing records on the shared drive. This number includes the entire directory path.

A sample subject line would read: RMSProject_InternshipSLAISStudent_20150420.msg

Tips & Examples[2]

TIP	GOOD EXAMPLE	BAD EXAMPLE	WHY?
Denote dates in YYYMMDD format	20160403	04032016	Computers will sort YYYMMDD in chronological order
Make a concise unique project or account identifier	UBCO	University of British Columbia Okanagan	Keep it short to avoid side scrolling and column adjustment when browsing through your files
Use the document form element to enhance the summary of the document in the file name	RMProject_GUI_20160409_RevA.docx	RMProject_20160409.docx	Files will be found more quickly and easily when you can include abbreviated descriptive information in the file name
Use an underscore as a delimiter and avoid spaces or other special characters such as: & , . * % # ; ( ) ! @ $ ^ { } [ ] ? < > - + =	RMProject_GUI_20160409_RevA.docx	RMProject-Guidelines 2016 04 09*RevA.docx	The special characters are difficult to read and different systems handle them differently
Keep track of document revisions by adding the	RMProject_GUI_20160409_RevA.docx	RMProject_Guidelines_20160409_FinalDraft.docx	Keep the revisions clearly documented because category

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[2] These tips and examples were first developed by Eugene Barsky for use with Research Data Management.

revision element separated			style addendums will be confusing in the future
Avoid complex folder hierarchies if possible	F:/Env/LIBR/RMProject_GUI_20140409_RevA.docx	F:/Environment/LibraryjWoodward/Data/Education/Materials/Draft/2014/04/RMProject_GUI_20160409_v01.docx	Complex folder hierarchies require more effort for file navigation, saving and system backups

Glossary

Term	Definition
authentic	An authentic record is what it purports to be: it was created by the person listed as the author, for the intended purpose, at the listed time or date of creation
CamelCase	Writing phrases with no spaces in between the words and the first letter of each word capitalized, for example: ThisIsCamelCase
document register	A list of all records in a project, unit, department, or organization, where each document is given a unique identifier
ISO Standard	Internationally recognized standards formulated in committees of experts by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO); each Standard is a formula or roadmap outlining the agreed upon best way to do something
metadata	Data providing information about an object, such as the title, document form, date created, and the creator
reliable	A reliable record is complete, capable of being used, and capable of achieving the purpose for which it was created

DOCUMENT CONTROL		
Revision	Issued For	Date
0	Issued for Use	20150209
1	Removed dashes and replaced with underscore to be in-line with research data management naming principles; removed version and replaced all with revision	20160418
2	Corrected error in example	20170327
3	Corrected duplication error	20170512
4	Updated document style	20210406
5	Corrected ISO number for date standard	20221130