NAMING CONVENTIONS FOR ELECTRONIC FILES AND FOLDERS

File and folder naming conventions are key to maintaining well-organized electronic directory and drive structures. This tip sheet provides examples of naming conventions; each unit may determine its own file naming procedure as long as it is applied consistently. Benefits of consistent file and folder naming are:

- Files are easily distinguished one from another
- File names are easier to browse
- Retrieval is facilitated for all users (not just the file's creator)

1. Keep file names short and relevant.

2. If using a date, use the format Year-Month-Day (four digit year, two digit month, two digit day): YYYY-MM-DD or YYYY-MM or YYYY-YYYY.

This will maintain chronological order.

This	Not This
2006-03-24 Agenda	1 Feb 2007 Agenda
2006-03-24 Attachment	24 March 2006 Agenda
2006-03-24 Minutes	24 March 2006 Minutes
2007-02-01 Agenda	February 1, 2007 Minutes
2007-02-01 Minutes	March 24, 2006 Attachment

3. Include a leading zero for numbers 0-9.

This will maintain the numeric order in the file directory.

This	Not This
Office Procedures v01	Office Procedures v1
Office Procedures v02	Office Procedures v10
Office Procedures v03	Office Procedures v2

4. Order the elements in a file name according to the way the file will be retrieved.

If records are retrieved according to their date, that element should appear first. If they are retrieved according to their description, that element should appear first.

Tip ✔ File names of records relating to recurring events (e.g., meeting minutes, regular periodic reports, budget planning documents) should include both the date and the event.

When deciding the order of the elements, date first will usually be appropriate for events that are time specific and recurring. Event first will usually be appropriate for events that are infrequent.

This	Not This
/…/Curriculum Committee	**/…/Curriculum Committee**
2007-01-20 Agenda	Agenda 1 Feb 2007
2007-01-20 Minutes	Agenda 20 Jan 2007
2007-02-01 Agenda	Minutes 1 Feb 2007
2007-02-01 Minutes	Minutes 20 Jan 2007

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This	Not This
/…/Events	**/…/Events**
Awards Ceremony 2006-06-30	2005-10-05 Donor Reception
Donor Reception 2005-10-05	2006-06-30 Awards Ceremony
Japanese Delegation Visit 2007-02	2007-02 Japanese Delegation Visit

5. Avoid descriptive terms regarding format or version (e.g. draft, memo) at the start of file names.

This	Not This
/…/Publicity/	**/…/Publicity/**
Advertising Draft	Draft Advertising
Advertising Final	Draft Budget Report 2006-2007
Budget Report 2005-2006 Final	Final Advertising
Budget Report 2006-2007 Draft	Final Budget Report 2005-2006
Grant, S.	Memo A. Thomas
Thomas, A.	Memo S. Grant

Tip ✔ When using personal names, always give family name at the start of file name and use a standard format for first names.

6. The version number of a record should be indicated in its file name by the use of "v" followed by the version number.

This	Not This
Org Chart 2006 v02	Org Chart 2006
Org Chart 2006 v03	Org Chart 2006 rev
Org Chart 2006 v04	Org Chart 2006 rev2