

Data Nudge

A monthly reminder to manage your data



While many modern operating systems tolerate variation in file and directory names, research data files are often used by scripts and tools on a variety of platforms, which can be less tolerant. Today, we're sharing recommended tips for naming conventions as well as the risks of having characters in your file names.

Recommended tips for file naming:

- Use YYYY-MM-DD format
- Names best tolerated by the widest variety of systems use a combination of **letters, numbers, underscores, and hyphens**
- Standard file extensions that indicate the type of file (ex: .txt) are helpful for machine action
- Keep names short
- Be **CONSISTENT**

* Visit [Nudge #2,2017](#) for more information

Issues with using special characters or case in file name:

- Quotation ("), question marks (?), apostrophes ('), asterisks (*) and spaces can incorrectly terminate the name in some scripts and systems
 - Semicolons (;) are used to separate commands on many systems, and might produce unexpected results
 - Some file systems are case sensitive and some are not. So, relying on case to differentiate files is risky
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