

Records Management in Museums - naming your files and folders

Naming files and folders **meaningfully** and **consistently** helps you to access and add to your museum's body of knowledge without duplicating work.

Whether you are naming your paper folders or electronic documents, you need to find a meaningful title that is as short as possible.

Your museum may have its own naming conventions – talk to colleagues to find out. The following hints will also help when naming folders:

Do

- ✓ be concise and only include essential information; avoid 'the', 'of', 'a' etc
- ✓ use an agreed numerical date format, like 'YYYY-YYYY', 'YYYYMMDD'
- ✓ use unique, descriptive names, eg. G:\DisplayCaptions\2010\cats.pdf
- ✓ check with your IT support if hyphens, spaces and underscores will cause problems

Don't

- ✗ use personal names, eg. 'Sally's folders'
- ✗ use abbreviations that aren't widely understood
- ✗ use meaningless or general words for folders such as 'drafts', 'misc.' or 'letters'
- ✗ repeat information in different parts of the name, eg. G:\BoardMeetings\Agendas\20101216Agenda.doc

What to do next

Read the fact sheet **Records Management in Museums – version control** for related guidance.

Find out if there is someone in your museum with responsibility for records management, or if someone is doing work in that area. Talk to them and others about good naming practice you can build on, and things that need improving.

Visit www.museuminfo-records.org.uk for more detailed guidance on records management in museums, interactive training and other resources to adapt and use in your museum free of charge.
