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COMPUTER CLINIC

First Aid for Computers - Evolving IT Systems and Solutions for Computers and People

FILE & FOLDER NAMING CONVENTIONS + DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT & SAVING TECHNIQUES

The below is business critical and will help avoid potential problems which can affect file handling, saving without corruption, impact on syncing as well as the ability to be backed up. Overall, bad practice will contribute to potential problems. So please read carefully and pass it on to all your team.

OVERVIEW

When we receive a file from another source or download one off the internet, these files can often have a ridiculously long name with 'illegal' characters. Even though these files can be opened, it normally leads to problems down the track, especially and mainly when trying to copy, save, sync or backup the file. The best practice is for everyone to understand 'good and bad file naming conventions' and to proactively avoid potential issues that can surround this.

#1 - RULE - DO NOT USE ANY OF THE BELOW IN THE FILE NAME OR ON FOLDER NAMES

! # $ % & ' @ ^ ` ~ + , . ; : =) ([ ] { } /   *These are all classified as 'illegal characters'*

#2 - RULE - DO NOT USE DOTS as part of the file or folder name.

BAD Examples	GOOD Examples
Christchurch.Photo	Christchurch-Photo
1. Admin Folder	01_Admin Folder
2. Accounts Folder	02_Accounts Folder

#3 - RULE - DO NOT USE SLASHES IN DATES

Dates are another major problem on file naming conventions.
For example, if you use dates, then using the below will potentially cause major issues or corruption.

DO NOT USE SLASHES OR DOTS -   15/08/16 or 15.08.16

SO WHAT CAN YOU USE INSTEAD?

Use the underscore (_) or dash (-) where you can for everything - this is a good habit to get into.

E.g. 15_08_16 or 15-08-16 or Christchurch_Photo or Christchurch-Photo

BEST PRACTICES FOR NAMING CONVENTIONS - NOT A RULE BUT MAKES IT LOOK NICE
Use the underscore and capitalised letters to make this more readable, standout.   N.B.The underscores and Capital letters are NOT compsulary.
You can use spaces and do not need to use capitals, however, we are showing you the absolute textbook recommendation from Microsoft and Apple which also helps keep the 'Path' length down - see below.

#4 RULE - KEEP PATH LENGTHS UNDER 128 CHARACTERS (DO NOT USE A LONG NAME)

Hard coded into all computers is a path length rule. The path is a description of where the file is actually stored. What this means is that if you add up all the characters (including spaces) in a file name (which includes the location [path] that it is stored in, they should NOT exceed 128 characters in total length.

E.g. The below File Name (Repaired_Building.jpeg) has a 'path' length of over 128 characters so will not sync, backup or save correctly and may potentially cause corruption too.

 ComputerName Users Username Desktop ReferenceDocs Project 2021 BuildingDamage Building_02013 Photos-2011-02-22 *Repaired_Building.jpeg*

USE THE BELOW METHODOLOGY - This will keep the overall path length down

ComputerName Customer_Name Project_02 Manuals Saving_Files.docx

CHARACTER LENGTH OF THE ACTUAL FILE NAME AND PATH COMBINED
Please remember that the international limit for file names is **128 characters**. This is **NOT** a best practice, it is **COMPULSORY**.
The overall length of characters of a file is therefore the actual path and file name combined.

E.g.
ComputerName Customer_Name Project_02 Manuals Saving_Files.docx   is 50 characters long,

Even though the actual file name (Saving_Files.docx) is only 12 characters long!

If your file name (including path) goes over the limit of 128 characters, then you will potentially have a lot of problems.

REMINDER - PLEASE NOTE :-

1. DO NOT Use long file names and paths - over 128 characters and you will have technical issues.

2. DO NOT Use any form of punctuation or special characters. Again, this confuses computers and potentially causes a lot of problems. E.g. ! # $ % & ' @ ^ ` ~ + , . ; : =) ([ ] { } /

3. DO NOT Use slashes in file or folder names or dates - 15/08/16   or 15.08.16

4. DO NOT Use dots or commas when naming files or folders. This confuses computers a lot and potentially causes major problems. E.g. do not use   Repaired,Building,01.01.2021.jpeg

We hope this helps avoid issues down the track. Please pass this information on to all your team so that everyone is educated accordingly.

Thanks for all the team at Computer Clinic