















EXERCISE ONE

FILE NAMING

1. Read through the following file names.
2. If you returned to this data folder in a year's time do you think you would be able to recognise what each of these files contains?
3. What information do you think you need in a file name in order to identify what is in the file's contents?

 Doc. 1	 My data
 IMPORTANT	 My Passwords
 Thesis Final final	 Thesis version 12
 My study	 Data chart for interviews
 Interview with Jane	 Int 1 (2)
 Interview with Janet	 My thesis (copy)
 Int. 1	 New doc.

Well-organised file names and folder structures make it easier to find and keep track of data files. A system needs to be practical and used consistently.

Good file names can provide useful cues to the content and status of a file, uniquely identify a file and help in classifying files. File names can contain project acronyms, researchers' initials, file type information, a version number, file status information and date.

Best practice is to:

- create meaningful but brief names
- use file names to classify broad types of files
- avoid using spaces and special characters
- avoid very long file names

Whilst computers add basic information and properties to a file, such as file type, date and time of creation and modification, this is not reliable data management. For example, when files are copied, for revision or as a template, the system does not account for their new purpose and treats them as a copy of the original file.

Examples:

- **FG1_CONS_12Feb10** is the file that contains the transcript of the first focus group with a study of consumers, that took place on 12 February 2010
- **Int024_AP_5June08** is an interview with participant 024, interviewed by Anne Parsons on 5 June 2008

Version numbering in file names is useful to indicate file revisions or edits, especially in collaborations. This can be through discrete or continuous numbering depending on minor or major revisions.

Example:

FILE NAME	CHANGES TO FILE
LC_Interviewschedule_1.0	Original document
LC_Interviewschedule_1.1	Minor revisions made
LC_Interviewschedule_1.2	Further minor revisions
LC_Interviewschedule_2.0	Substantive changes