

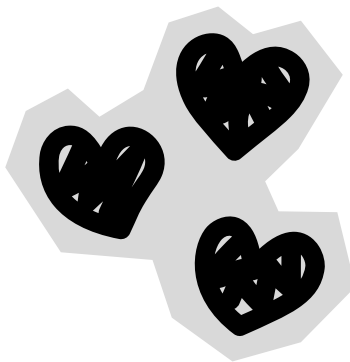


Research Data Services
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



HANDLE WITH CARE

Tips for Managing Your
Research Data





RESEARCH DATA SERVICES: WHO WE ARE

Research Data Services (RDS) is a free campus resource that supports UW–Madison researchers as they gather, manage, and share their research data to make their data citable, reproducible, and publicly accessible.

Connect with us at
www.researchdata.wisc.edu!

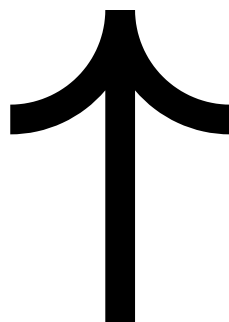




Why should you manage your data?

- Many funders and publishers require it
- It will help your team members collaborate better
- Help prevent data loss – and heartbreak!
- Future you will thank you

YOU SIX MONTHS FROM
NOW IS YOUR CLOSEST
COLLABORATOR



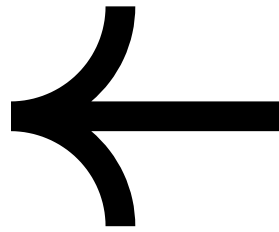
PLANNING

The first step in managing your data is planning. This means thinking through and documenting how data and other materials will be organized, saved, prepared, analyzed, and shared over the course of your research project. It's not a one time activity. You'll need to revise as necessary and iterate.

Example plans: Data Management Plan, Sustainability Plan, IRB Proposal



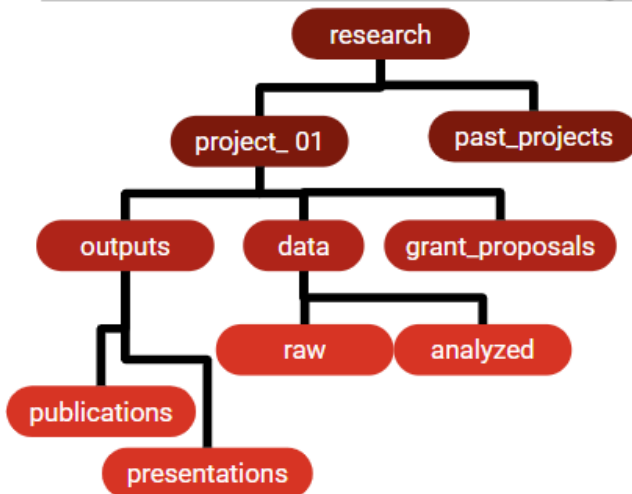
ORGANIZING YOUR FILES



Arrange your data and other research materials so they can be easily found by yourself and others as needed.

You'll want to organize your files into folders and use descriptive names you'll be able to understand. You'll also want to decide on a version control strategy and document how you are choosing to organize your materials.

Folder Organization Tips



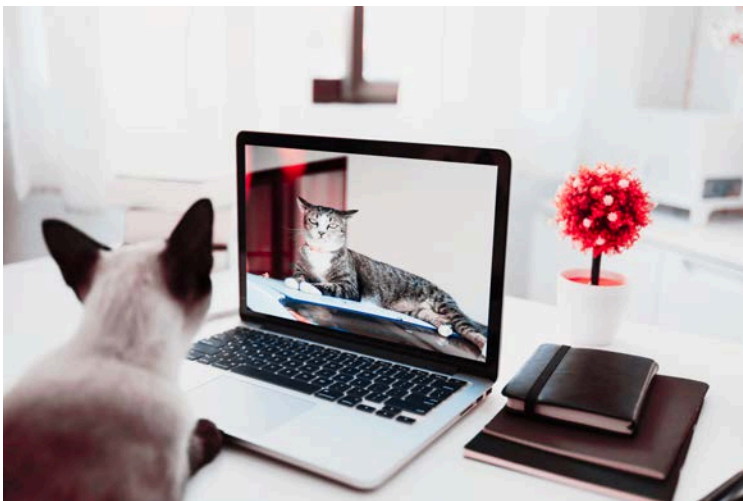
- **One folder** per project
- Consider **reusing file structure** across projects
- Use **specific names**
- Group by **similarity** or function
- Separate old versions and inactive projects in an **"archive"** folder

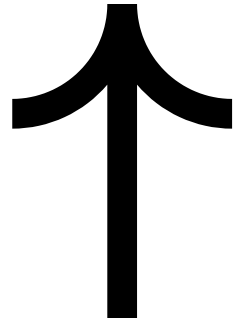


DOCUMENTING DATA

Make sure to capture the information others or future you would need to understand your files. This metadata can be captured in things like:

- Readme files
- Data dictionaries,
- Or codebooks for survey data or qualitative research





HOW TO NAME FILES

- **Keep it simple.** Make it human understandable and machine readable
- **Pick 2–3 key things.** Go from broad to narrow. (book_chapter_paragraph.docx)
- **No special characters** / \ : * ? " < > [] & \$
- **Avoid spaces** use – a – dash, try _ underscores, or CamelCase
- Format the date (YYYYMMDD or YYYY–MM–DD)

File001.xlsx

vs.

YYYYMMDD_SourceName_ItemName.xlsx



STORAGE



Store research materials so that they can be accessed and used by yourself or by others at a later date.

- Use storage services that meet your data's needs. (Restricted? Large quantities?)
- Remember hardware has a life span
- Short term storage solutions for data in current use. Long term storage for preservation.
- Store data in open or easily accessible formats
- Store data alongside documentation and code
- Review your storage options on campus

3-2-1 RULE

- Make at least 3 copies of your data
- Store it on 2 different types of storage media
- Keep 1 version offsite.



CAMPUS RESOURCES

Research Data Services:

<https://researchdata.wisc.edu/>

Data Science Hub:

<https://hub.datascience.wisc.edu/>

UW–Madison Information Technology:

<https://it.wisc.edu/>

Human Research Protection Program:

<https://irb.wisc.edu/>

