



File Management

Digital Stewardship Curriculum

File Management

- Storing, naming, sorting and handling computer files
- Folder structure
- File naming

- When you create digital files, you want to be just as organized as you are with physical collections
- File management is the storing, naming, and handling of computer files
- Lots of topics when it comes to file management and organization---
- Everything from how to label different types of copies to choosing the best file types for a certain format.
- Folder structure - main tool for organizing files - how you are setting up nested folders for files
- File naming - how you are naming each individual file

Folder Structure

- Meaningful arrangement (just like with physical materials)
- “Simple but useful”
- Allow quick access, avoid redundancy
- Use nested folders to your advantage
- Consider starting fresh with legacy collections

- You want to have a thought-out plan for how you arrange your files
- Organize the actual files in a simple but useful way.
- Not too many folders, not too few
 - Everyone has a different filing system - consider when working together as a team
 - Don't want to nest the images too deeply into too many folders, but you will want them to live in a unique place.
- Nested folders
 - You can create subfolders for “master files” “access copies” “publication copies” depending on what you may need the images for in the future. I find organizing by date to be less useful but maybe that would work best for you
- Don't let it get too complicated
- If you have digital files that you got from someone else, don't be afraid to rearrange if necessary. Make a copy of the original and redo. Sometimes you might even have to rescan/redigitize these types of files.
- What works best for you for the use of your time?
- The goal is to be able to tell quickly and consistently where your images live.

Folder Structure Examples

- **Collection**

- Boxes,
 - **Folders**
 - Preservation copies, access copies, web-ready derivatives
- Dates
- Series
- Formats

- For Digitized files: Collection - almost always a good idea
- Mirror the physical collection - be able to trace back
- VERSIONS of copies (archival scans, access copies --- OR could just list the file types)
 - This is a concept called VERSIONING - we will talk about with DP, but it has a very practical application
- Dates - yearbooks, newspapers, annual events
- Collection series folders could be helpful in some cases, or formats of materials, but this is less common than relying on the existing box/folder structure

File naming

- **Versioning**
 - Plan for different versions of files (like preservation and access)
- **Unique Identifier**
 - File name that is not to same as any other file, to avoid confusion
- **Persistent and consistent**
 - File name structure applied across different collections
- **Well defined**
 - Document your way of naming files

- It really is important to develop a file naming schema beforehand, and use it consistently throughout projects. It will make managing the potentially hundreds or thousands of photos you create much, much easier.

File naming examples

- Mirror collection organization and folder structure
 - Follow collection, box folder, number of item information for simple tracing back to collection
- Prefix and suffix additions
 - “V” = verso, backside of image
 - “x01” = numbering assigned during digitization
 - “ntbk” = manuscript is or contains bound notebook
 - “front_cover,” “back_cover,” “title_page”

- In the archives, we use some of these prefixes and suffixes to describe differences amongst pages in a single manuscript or collection item.
 - Verso is the back of page (the recto side is the front, but we don't note that) and we only ever capture the verso if there is something unique written on the back. We use some shorthand if the word we are trying to describe is too long or if the filename has multiple long, but identifying words we need to include.
 - So to summarize, choose filenames that are unique, well-defined, consistent, and persistent. Also think about technical restrictions like special characters or character limits (usually about 32 characters should be the max and special characters are best avoided), and include the extension at the end of the filename, which helps you quickly see what type of file it is.
 - And since you will likely have to rename your files after you've created them, adding a filenaming field to your project tracking sheet would be helpful.

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