



Digitisation Toolkit

File naming guide for digital files

Please note: this info guide refers to other info guides in the Digitisation Toolkit. If you would like to learn more about what digitisation is, creating a digitisation plan and selecting Queensland heritage material, we recommend you visit this SLQ web page: [Digitisation Toolkit](#). There you can find all the Digitisation Toolkit guides both online and in printable PDF format.

You have a digitisation plan, you have made selection of your Queensland heritage materials and are ready to start scanning and capturing your physical items in order to create digital surrogates for access and preservation. Before you start scanning and capturing, you will need to set up file naming and file directories for all digitised files.

File naming

File naming is setting up digital files with appropriate file names for individual files and for the computer directories that the files are going into.

File naming conventions

File naming conventions are best practices established and accepted throughout the world to provide consistent ways to name the files, to store the files in a computer system, to find files and to access files in the future.

State Library of Queensland recommends starting with setting up file directories by format with consistent file names to be used by everyone in the organisation. Consistent file naming by format is for both *turned digital* (digital surrogate of a physical item) and *born digital* files (digital capture where there is no physical item, e.g. digital photos). This includes:

- Image files – photographs, manuscripts, books, maps, music scores and artists' books
- Audio files – music, oral histories, public speakers or other public programs (webcasts)
- Audio-visual files – films, VHS, recordings of public presentations (webcasts) and
- Digital stories

Why use consistent file naming?

Consistent and appropriate file naming is the most fundamental process you can set up to ensure that digital files of Queensland's heritage collections will be available in the future.



Tips for file naming:

- Use a basic file naming structure that identifies the accession number, then the file name for the capture
- Use numbers when possible with dashes
- Stay away from underscores and long file names whenever possible
- Don't leave blank spaces between numbers
- Stay away from words or phrases, use numbers when possible.
- Rely heavily on your accession record numbers here

Example of file naming:

7980-0001	(digital folder)
7980-0001-0001.tif	(digital file in the folder with file name for first item\suffix indicates type of file -tiff)
7980-0001-0001	(accession number, set of photos, first photo in set)
7980-0001-0002	(accession number, set of photos, second photo in set)

All digital files at SLQ are prefixed with a reference code. This is usually the accession number. Digital objects from multipart collections include an item/part number element. This may be one of the following:

- Item number
- Volume number
- Volume a issue numbers
- Date
- Track number

Multipart objects will include a sequential image element. The file naming sequence will start at 0001, regardless of actual page number of the item, except in the case of maps, where it refers to the actual sheet number.

How to save files

- Place master / archival files in a separate computer directory and lock it down
- Create derivatives for sharing, engagement and place in a separate computer directory
- Use derivatives for everyday engagement, not archival images
- Add **checksums** (formulas used to detect many data corruption errors and verify overall data integrity) to ensure all digital files are not corrupted



How to set up file naming directory structures for storage and access

1. State Library of Queensland sets up files by format for photos, posters, music and so on and then scans or captures, saving the files with the appropriate file names
2. The master digital files are uploaded to an incoming directory by format
3. After being checked, the master digital files are moved to an archive directory for digital preservation with copy access only
4. Derivatives are created from a copy of the master and are stored in a separate directory structure that everyone in the organisation can access
5. A small file (checksum) that can check for corruption or loss is attached to all digital files and stored as well in both the archival files and the derivative file

Additional resources:

- *Directory and File Naming Conventions for Digital Objects (version 1.06)* www.slq.qld.gov.au/aboutus/corporate/policies/protocols-and-standards
- *SLQ Capture Standards* www.slq.qld.gov.au/aboutus/corporate/policies/protocols-and-standards
- *Standard Naming Conventions for Electronic Records* www.recordsmanagement.ed.ac.uk
- *US Federal Agencies Digitization Guidelines Initiative* www.digitizationguidelines.gov

Need further information?

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