Naming Your Files for Use on the Web

Because electronic files can be accessed by any computer, you must be careful to name your files in such a way that they can be opened on any machine.

Here are some general guidelines to follow when naming your files:

1. **Length:** Keep your file names as short as possible. Different operating systems impose different restrictions regarding the length of filenames; this can range from 12 - 260 characters.

    > Best practice would be to keep your filename as close to 12 characters as possible, while still following any naming conventions your instructor/professor has established.

2. **Acceptable Characters:** To ensure your document can be opened, only use acceptable characters for your filenames. Acceptable characters are the basic alpha-numeric characters (a-z, 0-9), the period (.), and the underscore (_).

Filenames must **NOT** include special characters, such as:

` ~ ! @ # $ % ^ & * ( ) + = { } [ ] | \ / < > / ? , ; : ' "

Also, do not use spaces (use the underscore (_) instead), and only use a period to separate the filename from the extension (eg. my_file.doc).

If you are using numbers in your filenames, include a zero with single-digit numbers; (eg. use "01" instead of "1"). This way your files will display in logical order when you sort by filename.

Acceptable Examples:	Unacceptable Examples:
myname_01.doc	my name 01.doc
my_file_chpt01.doc	my_file_chpt#1.doc
chpt01_myname.txt	chpt#1.myname.txt

3. **Upper or Lower Case?** It is recommended that you use all lower case letters.

4. **Extensions:** The file extension is an indicator of the file type. PC machines will add the file extension for you, Mac machines will not. When working on a Mac, you must manually add the file extension to the filename or the file can not be easily viewed on a PC machine.

<div align="center">

my_name_chpt01.doc

filename   extension

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You do, of course, need to use the correct filename extension. Here is a brief list of common files and their corresponding extensions:

Word 2007 document:	.docx
Excel 2007 spreadsheet:	.xlsx
Text file:	.txt
Rich Text file:	.rtf
JPEG image	.jpg
GIF image:	.gif
PDF file:	.pdf
PowerPoint 2007:	.pptx
Photoshop document:	.psd

If you are unsure of the proper file extension, ask your instructor/professor.