



Naming Files

Good Practices Recommended by DIT

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I. Introduction

This document is a compilation of good practices for naming **files** at the Council of Europe.

It enables entities that do not yet have an established naming policy to follow certain rules in use in different departments in the Organisation. DIT has posted a [set of naming conventions](#) used in the Organisation on the [Archive Correspondents' site](#). (Don't hesitate to help us add to it).

II. Key file-naming concepts

Create filenames that are **short, without spaces** between the words.

- ❖ Choose significant keywords that will be of use in future searches.

Limit the number of characters to be typed (**fewer than 30 characters**) when creating filenames.

Limit the number of characters in the path **to fewer than 256 characters**.

- ❖ The path (URL) comprises all the successive levels making it possible to arrive at the location where the file is stored - successive folder names + filename.

Use **dashes "-"** instead of spaces.

- ❖ The underscore "_" is used at the end to indicate the language, if necessary (e.g. _eng).

Use **Arabic numerals** instead of Roman numerals.¹

Date: the formats YYYY_MM_DD and YYYYMMDD are both ISO compatible.

- ❖ Choose the same data format for all documents handled.

Position of the date: For each set of documents, decide whether it is best, for practical reasons, to place the date at the beginning of the filename or at the end, just before the document status (if the document status is used).

Do not use articles or linking words (for example: the, of, for, on, so, etc. in English or le, la, du, de, en, pour, donc, sur, etc. in French).

Do not use accents (acutes, grave accents, diaereses, circumflexes) or **cedillas** or any of the following **diacritics** (special characters) (non-exhaustive list):

“ ^ ° * ‘ « » " ° ` # { } [] < > | \ / @ = ~ + * % \$ € ? : & # ; ,

Create filenames **in the language in which the document is drafted**.

- ❖ Give files meaningful names which will enable a maximum number of users to find them easily using the search tools. If the filenames are in the language used to draft the document, the language code will enable users to see that the document is available in other languages. **The absence of a language code means that the document has not been translated.**

If it is necessary to add an indication of the language in which the document is drafted, use the **3-letter language code** of the ISO 639-2 alpha-3 biblio standard. This can be found in the [language vocabulary](#), in the "code" field, once the language has been selected.

¹ Except where the Roman numeral is part of the root of a document reference, e.g. DGIV(2004). See examples on page 3.

III. Naming referenced document files

Reference-document-title_ *language code*

Italics indicate optional characteristics.

Transcribe the **reference** as it appears on the document (removing the diacritics mentioned previously), followed by **2 or 3 words of the title** – the words that will be most relevant for future searches, without articles or linking words, and separated by dashes, and then the **language code** (if the document exists, or will be published, in different language versions), with no spaces.

Examples:

Reference document	on the	Filename in English	Filename in French
DGIV(2004)III		DGIV(2004)3-freedom-fighters_eng	DGIV(2004)3-combattants-liberte_fre
EG(2004)5		EG(2004)5-violence-women_eng	EG(2004)5-violence-femmes_fre
CM/AS(2006)Rec1736prov		CM-AS(2006)Rec1736prov-condemnation-franco-regime_eng	CM-AS(2006)Rec1736prov-condamnation-franquisme-regime_fre
CM(2006)230		CM(2006)230-cooperation-coe-unicef_eng	CM(2006)230-cooperation-coe-unicef_fre

In the case of referenced documents, the document **status** (phase of the document's lifecycle: provisional = prov / revision = rev / final) may form an integral part of the reference.

IV. Naming publication files

IV.1 . Publications with ISBN or ISSN numbers

ISBN-document-title_ *language code*

Italics indicate optional characteristics.

ISBN or **ISSN number** followed by **2 or 3 words of the title** – using the words that will be most relevant for future searches, without articles or linking words, and separated by dashes, and then the language code (if the document exists, or will be published, in different language versions), with no spaces.

Examples:

Publication title	Filename
Learning and living democracy: introducing quality assurance of education for democratic citizenship in schools, comparative study of ten countries	978-92-871-6522-0-Learning-living-democracy_eng
Guidance on the development of legislation and administration systems in the field of cultural heritage	978-92-871-6922-8-Guidance-development_eng
Orientations pour le développement de législation et de systèmes de gestion du patrimoine culturel	978-92-871-6921-1-Orientations-developpement-patrimoine_fre

L'Europe de la démocratie et des droits de l'homme	978-92-871-6506-0-Europe-democratie_fre
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IV.2 . Publications with no ISBN or ISSN number

Document-title-date_language code

Italics indicate optional characteristics.

2 or 3 words of the title – the words that will be most relevant for future searches, without articles or linking words, and separated by dashes, and then the **language code** (if the document exists, or will be published, in different language versions), with no spaces.

Examples:

Document title	Filename
47 states and one organisation, the Council of Europe	47-states
A la découverte de l'Europe des 47 du Conseil de l'Europe	Decouverte-Europe-47_fre
The European Convention on Human Rights at 60: building on the past, looking to the future	ECHR-60-anniversary

V. Naming other document files

Documenttype-document-title-date-status_language code

Italics indicate optional characteristics

Document type – or the abbreviation – followed by a 2 or 3 words of the title – the words that will be most relevant for future searches, without articles or linking words, and separated by dashes, followed by the date and the *document's current status (version type - if necessary)*, with no spaces.

Examples:

Document title	Filename
Compte rendu de la réunion des Correspondants Archives du 10 June 2013	CR-CA-20130610
Satisfaction Survey on DGA services - Comparative results 2007 - 2013	Satisfaction-Survey-2007-2013_eng

Note concerning "document type" (category of document):

Examples:

AO=Appel d'offre
 CR = Compte rendu
 BAT = Bon à tirer
 PV=Procès-verbal
 Etc.

Note concerning "status":

This information can be added to the filename when it is created, but only if the documents are stored in an area with no integrated versioning functionality.

Note concerning the composition of the "version number" (except for collaborative sites if the functionality has been activated, DMS and RMS):

N: Numerical sequence beginning with 0 or 1, depending on the case (see below). The version is changed when a validated document must be modified.

R: (revision). When preparing a version N, a digit between 1 and 9 indicates that it is a working version, which cancels and replaces a working version bearing a lower number.

For example, version 2.3 cancels and replaces version 2.2. These versions will culminate in a version 3, which will be submitted to the persons responsible for validating the document.

For a given document, a version "0.R" exists only internally if needed. "0.R" versions are not indexed by search engines.

Example:

0.1	Document under preparation
1.0	Validated document
1.1	Document submitted for validation
1.2	2nd version of a document submitted for validation
2.0	Final validated document

Examples including document status in the form of a version number:

Document title	Filename
Satisfaction Survey on DGA services - Comparative results 2007 - 2013	Satisfaction-Survey-2007-2013-2.0_eng
Compte rendu de la réunion des Correspondants Archives du 10 June 2013	CR-CA-20130610-0.1

VI. Naming web pages

Since filenames for web pages serve to construct web addresses (URLs), they must follow very specific rules. URLs must be easy for users to read but must also be conducive to referencing by search engines, to enhance "visibility".

Here are a few good practices:

No spaces or accents or special signs.

Use keywords that clearly retranscribe the content – usually taken from the title – and avoid terms that do not add value

Avoid abbreviations and terms used for page management (such as an indication of the language).

Use dashes (-) to separate words, and not underscores (_).

- ❖ Do not use strings of joined-up words as this creates terms which have no meaning (e.g. webdesignworkshop).

Names should not be too long. They should generally comprise 5 words at the most, but they may be longer if necessary.

Put the most important words at the beginning.

Page title	Filename / URL
Webdesign coaching workshop	workshop-coaching-web-design
Secretary General expresses condolences over Russian airliner crash	crash-airliner-russian-egypt-condolences-secretary-general

For further information, see the Web Resources section on "Search Engine Optimization": <http://www.coe.int/en/group/web-resources/seo>.

A form is provided by the Web Coordination Unit for any further questions.