

Organizing your Digital Files – Color, Consistency, and Naming Conventions

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How Many Files Do You Have?

Most users have thousands of digital files on their computer, phones, and tablets. To see how many files you currently have:

- o Go to Windows Explorer
- o Choose the folders where your files reside
- o “Right-click” and select Properties
- o The number of files will be listed

Why be Organized?

- o Save time and money
- o Easily locate things
- o Reduce stress
- o Meet deadlines
- o Be in control

Why Digital Filing Systems?

They en-ABLE us because they are:

- o Searchable
- o Sortable
- o Portable
- o Archivable
- o Shareable

Digital Systems

- o Folder naming conventions
- o Can be on the cloud
- o Redundant backups
- o File formats including (word, pdf, jpg)
- o Searchable/sortable
- o Can use tags
- o Can easily share with others

Establish Systems

Choose the system to organize your digital files that works for you! Once you decide on a system, stick with it. This is the consistency needed to get your files under control. Using naming conventions may be the single most important thing to do after writing citations to make sure your genealogy is well documented and easy to find – both for you and other users.

COLOR

Mary E. V. Hill created a color-coding system to organize your paper files. The system uses colors to represent your surnames:

- o 16 surnames
 - o Father's Fathers (blue)
 - o Father's Mothers (green)
 - o Mother's Fathers (red)
 - o Mother's Mothers (yellow)

Several genealogy software companies offer this system inside their programs including:

- o Family Tree Maker
- o Roots Magic
- o Legacy Family Tree

Additionally, you can create folders with colored folder icons readily available for FREE or a small fee.

NAMING CONVENTIONS

“Do the hardest things first. Procrastination is avoidance
of things we naturally do not want to do.”

Cynthia K. Patton

Starting with the NEXT time you save a file, use your naming conventions. Establish your naming conventions and print a list out and post near your computer for reference until you get used to the process.

MAHANNA_Charles_DC_12 Feb 1977

MAHANNA_Charles and Nellie_Marriage_14 Feb 1887

GUERNSEY COUNTY_OHIO_Map_1864

GUERNSEY COUNTY_OHIO_List of Will

NGS_Quarterly_Sep 2018

PATTON_Shephard_Photo_ In Uniform__Apr 1967

Digital Folders

- o By SURNAME
 - o KEEFER
 - Abram S. (1847)
 - Clyde Andrew (1926)
 - Clyde Roosevelt (1904)
 - o THOMAS
 - Charles W. (1882)
 - George W. (1848)
- o By RECORD TYPE
 - o Births
 - o Census
 - o Deaths
 - o Marriages
 - o Military
 - o Property
 - o Wills
 - o Letters/Stories
- o By LOCATION
 - o Pennsylvania
 - Fayette County
 - Westmoreland County
 - Somerset County
 - o Ohio
 - Belmont County
 - Guernsey County

CONSISTENCY

These systems will work for your genealogy, but they will also work for your personal life, finances, volunteer organizations, and other pursuits. Happy Organizing and Good Luck!

Getting Organized Tool Kit

- o <http://www.genrootsorganizer.com/>
- o <https://thefamilycurator.com/easy-digital-filenaming-to-organize-genealogy-files/>
- o <https://www.lifewire.com/change-folder-icons-in-windows-11-5200732>
- o https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uy4ZQSxAGHzz_Ci2FN4LyxRxOhZboAN4/view