**NARA Best Practices for Naming Conventions**

New naming conventions should consider the current state of any existing agency naming conventions and NARA best practices.

* Be unique and consistently structured;
* Be persistent and not tied to anything that changes over time or location;
* Limit character length to no more than 25-35 characters;
* Use leading 0s to facilitate sorting in numerical order if following a numeric scheme “001, 002” etc.” instead of “1, 2”;
* Use a period followed by a file extension (for example: .pdf, .wav, .mpg);
* Use lowercase letters, except when a name has more than one word, start each word with an uppercase letter for example, “File\_Name\_Convention\_001.doc”;
* Do not use characters such as symbols or spaces that could cause complications;
* Use hyphens or underscores instead of spaces;
* Use international standard date notation (YYYY-MM-DD or YYYYMMDD);
* Avoid blank spaces anywhere within the character string;
* Do not use an overly complex or lengthy naming scheme that is susceptible to human error during manual input, such as “filenameconventionjoesfinalversioneditedfinal.doc”