

Version Control System for your Thesis

GRS Writing Group – WED 28 JUN

I doubt there's a single person who has used computers who hasn't been genuinely, painfully, permanently traumatized by the loss of a file, a phone, an email, a folder, or an entire hard drive. We could call it "Post Data Loss Stress Disorder," or, maybe "Data shock." It can lead to chronic "Data Loss Dysphoria", crippling "Anticipatory Data Loss Anxiety," and recurring nightmares about finding a folder labelled "BACKUP" on an old hard drive, only to discover that the folder is empty. For some, it leads to "Digital Withdrawal Syndrome."

- Dean. 2017. Data loss trauma: The pain is real. Coding at 50 blog. <http://codingat50.com/data-loss-trauma-the-suffering-is-real/>



What is your thesis backup plan?

How do you differentiate different versions of your thesis files?

How do your supervisors provide feedback on your drafts?

How do you manage suggested revisions from your supervisors?

Version Control

Version control is the means by which different versions and drafts of a document (or file or record or dataset) are managed. This is particularly important if data is being used by multiple members of a research team, or if research files are shared across different locations. Version control involves a process of naming and distinguishing between a series of draft documents (or file or record or dataset) which lead to a final (or approved) version, which in turn may be subject to further amendments. It also provides an audit trail for the revision and update of draft and final versions.

ANDS 23 (research data) Things. <http://www.ands.org.au/partners-and-communities/23-research-data-things> File Wrangling <http://www.ands.org.au/working-with-data/data-management/file-wrangling>

My top tips for ensuring file management issues never slow your progress:

1. Don't throw anything away – either electronic or paper copies
2. Keep the originals of all your graphic files
3. Autosave at high frequency
4. Regularly backup your files in three different locations
5. Backup everything, including your data & bibliographic library
6. Backup everything before you install new software
7. Check your backup
8. Choose a consistent, logical naming system for all files and disks
9. If using MS Word, understand how to use autorecover, track changes (and remove track changes), compare documents, and add a read-only tag.
10. Consider file sharing software to manage simultaneous editing from multiple people



- UWA Policy on the Use of Editorial Assistance by Students
<http://www.governance.uwa.edu.au/procedures/policies/policies-and-procedures?method=document&id=UP09%2F9>
- MS Office File management <https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Introduction-to-document-management-fe6eb6d1-8f0c-412f-a3d5-3d71bd38c205>
- How to Collaborate with others in Microsoft Word
<https://www.lifehacker.com.au/2015/05/beyond-the-basics-how-to-collaborate-with-others-in-microsoft-word/>
- Google Doc <https://www.google.com.au/docs/about/>
- Mendeley <http://www.mendeley.com/>
- Thesis Whisperer. Back it up! <https://thesiswhisperer.com/2011/10/27/back-it-up/>
- Thesis Whisperer. Managing conflicting feedback on your thesis.
<https://thesiswhisperer.com/2015/09/30/do-you-really-own-your-thesis/>

Next session: JUL 19 Editing tables in Word

Further details of the UWA GRS Writing Group, including advice sheets to download, here:
www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/students/resources/communities#writinggroup