

UMC | Characters to Avoid in Directories and Filenames

You may only work in one operating system, however your web files will be viewed by numerous systems. Therefore, essential that you play it safe and avoid common illegal directory and filename characters. Some are illegal because operating system doesn't support them, others because they are used as variables or reserved characters. Naming important in web addresses as well as for binary files.

Do not use any of these common illegal characters:

# pound	< left angle bracket	\$ dollar sign	+ plus sign
% percent	> right angle bracket	! exclamation point	` backtick
& ampersand	* asterisk	' single quotes	pipe
{ left bracket	? question mark	" double quotes	= equal sign
} right bracket	/ forward slash	: colon	
\ back slash	blank spaces	@ at sign	

Also, keep these rules in mind.

- Don't start or end your filename with a space, period, hyphen, or underline.
- Keep your filenames under 31 characters.
- Most operating systems are case sensitive.
- [Non-ASCII characters](#) need to be escaped.

Example:

Bad filenames	Translates to
F&A Costs.html	F&A%20Costs.html
my PDF file#name.pdf	my%20PDF%20file%23name.pdf

Good filenames:

- F_A_Costs/index.html or F-A-Costs/index.html
- my_PDF_file_name.pdf or my-PDF-file-name.pdf

Note: This list is not exhaustive. It is meant to help you avoid common errors in filenames.