# VERSION CONTROL

## RESEARCH DATA TEAM, UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Version control is important for research accountability. It enables you to know which version of a dataset is the most recent, or which version was used to conduct a specific analysis or generate a visualisation. Version control may be required:

* when there are multiple users updating a dataset
* when a dataset is updated in multiple locations
* when multiple copies of a dataset are developed for different purposes.

**Naming Versions**

Some version control practices require each new version of the dataset to be saved separately and given a new file name. You should choose a file naming convention that will help you identify the different versions easily. Some details to consider using as part of a file naming convention for version control are:

* version number (e.g. v1, v2, v3 or 1.0, 1.1, 2.0)
* initials of the person who modified the data (e.g. JM, KMc, SC)
* date modified (e.g. 20160224)
* status (e.g. draft, revised, final)

**Version Control Table Template**

Much of this information is better captured in a separate version control table, rather than as part of the file name. A version control table documents the edit history of your data.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** |  |
| **Description** |  |
| **Created By** |  |
| **Date Created** |  |
| **Maintained By** |  |
| **Version Number** | **Modified By** | **Modifications Made** | **Date Modified** | **Status** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

**Other Version Control Tools**

Version control can also be managed using other purpose-built tools, such as:

* versioning software, e.g. [Git](https://git-scm.com/) or [Mercurial](https://www.mercurial-scm.org/)
* document management tools with automatic versioning, e.g. [eNotebooks](http://sydney.edu.au/research_support/eln/index.shtml) or [Records Online](http://sydney.edu.au/arms/rol/index.shtml)
* file syncing tools to automatically merge changes, e.g. [CloudStor+ Sync Client](http://staff.ask.sydney.edu.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/830/kw/830) or [Folder Monitor](https://informatics.sydney.edu.au/rdm/enotebooks/folder-monitor/)