

Lab 4.2.3: Basic DOS Commands

Estimated time: 30 Minutes

Objective

Upon completion of this lab, you will be able to navigate the DOS command line. You will also be able to perform basic file management tasks that include creating directories and files, navigating through directories, displaying content of directories, displaying and changing file attributes.

Equipment

The following equipment is required for this exercise:

- A computer with a version of DOS running

Scenario

Your manager has asked you to create a directory structure using the DOS command line. She wants you to create a directory in which documents for the upcoming inventory will be kept. The directory structure your manager wants you to create is **C:\IT\pcs**. She has also asked you to create a read-only test file.

Procedures

The following steps detail the process of managing files by using the DOS command line. Basic DOS commands will be used to carry out the task presented by your manager. At the end, the newly created directories and file you have created will be deleted safely.

Step 1

There are a few different ways to access the DOS prompt (command line). The most common way is to boot into a version of Windows, press the **Start** Menu > **Run** > then type "command". You can also access it by pressing the **Start** Menu > **Programs** > **Accessories** > and selecting **Command Prompt**. If Windows will not load, you can access the DOS prompt by pressing **F8** during the boot process and then selecting "Safe mode with command prompt".

As illustrated in Figure [1], when DOS is accessed, the window displays the "C" prompt (C:\>).



Figure [1] DOS prompt

Step 2

At the “C” prompt, type in “dir” to show a list of the directories located on this drive.

```
C:\>dir

Volume in drive C has no label
Volume Serial Number is 3608-11F7
Directory of C:\

SOURCE          <DIR>          01-07-02  10:38a  SOURCE
COMMAND.COM     93,890      04-23-99  10:22p  COMMAND.COM
WIN98           <DIR>          01-07-02  10:47a  WIN98
NETLOG.TXT      31,966      01-07-02  11:23a  NETLOG.TXT
CONFIG.SYS      0           01-07-02  11:42a  CONFIG.SYS
AUTOEXEC.BAT    0           01-07-02  11:26a  AUTOEXEC.BAT
SCANDISK.LOG    5,412      02-26-02  10:59a  SCANDISK.LOG
MYDOCU~1        <DIR>          01-07-02  11:43a  My Documents
PROGRA~1        <DIR>          01-07-02  10:47a  Program Files
               5 file(s)        131,268 bytes
               4 dir(s)     1,674,170,368 bytes free

C:\>_
```

Figure [2] Using the DIR command

As seen in Figure [2], DIR command will list directories and various files. Directories are specified with the <DIR> notation that precedes the file/directory. The DIR command also displays the volume name, free space, and total files and directories present.

Step 3

To create directories in DOS, use the **md directory_name** or **mkdir directory_name** command. Type “md IT” to create the IT directory.

```
C:\>md IT
```

Step 4

Next, display the IT directory using the **dir** command at the root (C:\>). Figure [3] shows the newly created IT directory.

```
C:\>dir

Volume in drive C has no label
Volume Serial Number is 3608-11F7
Directory of C:\

SOURCE          <DIR>          01-07-02  10:38a  SOURCE
COMMAND  COM          93,890    04-23-99  10:22p  COMMAND.COM
WIN98         <DIR>          01-07-02  10:47a  WIN98
NETLOG    TXT          31,966    01-07-02  11:23a  NETLOG.TXT
CONFIG    SYS              0    01-07-02  11:42a  CONFIG.SYS
AUTOEXEC  BAT              0    01-07-02  11:26a  AUTOEXEC.BAT
SCANDISK  LOG          5,412    02-26-02  10:59a  SCANDISK.LOG
MYDOCU~1    <DIR>          01-07-02  11:43a  My Documents
PROGRA~1    <DIR>          01-07-02  10:47a  Program Files
IT          <DIR>          03-19-02  12:12p  IT
          5 file(s)          131,268 bytes
          5 dir(s)    1,674,166,272 bytes free

C:\>_
```

Figure [3] Creating a Directory in DOS

Step 5

To change directories use the `cd directory_name` or `chdir directory_name` command. For example, to access the "IT" directory, type in "C:\>**cd IT**". Typing this command will change the "C" prompt to C:\IT>.

Step 6

The command prompt should now be C:\IT>. The next task is to create another directory called "pcs".

What command should you use to make this directory?

Step 7

Navigate to the newly created "pcs" directory.

What command would you use to change to the "pcs" directory?

What will the command line look like?

Step 8

To create a file in DOS, use the **copy con filename** command. This command will copy a file from the console (con) and place it in your directory. The console in this case is your screen. After you type this command you will have a blank line on the command prompt. You can then type in text that will be saved in the newly created file. When you are finished typing in your message, hold down the Control Key (<Ctrl>) press the **Z** key and then press the **Enter** key. This key combination will end the message and DOS will display "1 file(s) copied".

C:\IT\pcs>**copy con sample.txt**

This is an inventory test document

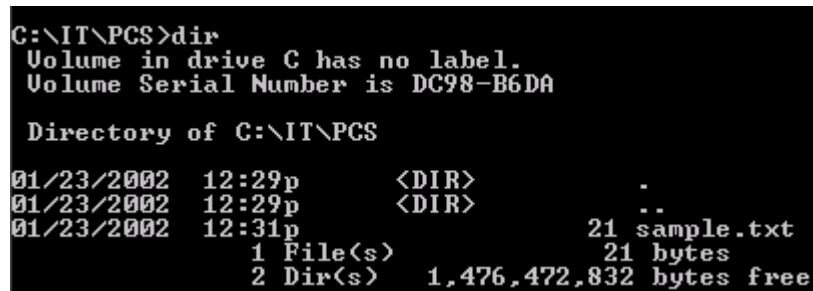
<Ctrl>+Z

<Enter>

1 file(s) copied

Step 9

Display the contents of the "pcs" directory. The newly created sample.txt in your directory will be displayed. Figure [4] shows the DOS output for DIR command in the "pcs" directory.



```
C:\IT\PCS>dir
Volume in drive C has no label.
Volume Serial Number is DC98-B6DA

Directory of C:\IT\PCS

01/23/2002  12:29p    <DIR>          .
01/23/2002  12:29p    <DIR>          ..
01/23/2002  12:31p                21 sample.txt
               1 File(s)                21 bytes
               2 Dir(s)  1,476,472,832 bytes free
```

Figure [4] DIR command showing the newly created file.

Step 10

Next, display the attributes for the sample.txt file. In order to display the attribute(s) of a file, type in **attrib filename**. Valid attribute values are:

- R – Read Only file attribute
- A – Archive file attribute
- S – System file attribute
- H – Hidden file attribute

What command would you type in to display the attributes of sample.txt?

What are the attribute(s) of sample.txt?

Step 11

To change, or remove an attribute use the **attrib [-/+]*attribute_value filename*** command. The minus (-) option will remove an attribute value from a file and the plus (+) option will add an attribute value to a file. As discussed early, valid attribute values are R (read-only), A (archive), S (system), H (hidden).

What command would change the attribute value of the sample.txt file to a Read-Only file?

Troubleshooting

If a command is unclear or forgotten, DOS can provide useful command information. DOS can provide general command syntax or detailed information about a specific command. The command to list all available commands is **c:\>help**. This command can be used at any level within the DOS structure. To find specific information about a command, including proper syntax and optional parameters, use the **c:\>command /?** command.

Reflection

What is the command to make a directory?

What is the command to delete or remove a directory?

List the four different attributes a file can be assigned?
