



MS-DOS

The word **DOS** is an acronym meaning “Disk Operating System”, it is one of the first Operating systems released as an IBM PC-Compatible based system, this OS is known as the background to all PC Operating Systems including Windows 7. Being that it runs in the background, makes it a single-user, single-task operating system with a basic command line and no GUI (Graphical User Interface). DOS is strictly Command Line functional, which simply means No “Icons”, “Mouse” or “Graphics”.

An Operating system is a software that creates a relation between the User, Software and Hardware. It is an interface between the all. All the computers need basic software known as an Operating System (OS) to function. The OS is the first software to be loaded when computers starts up. The entire application programs are loaded after the OS. Whenever an application needs information it requests the OS which in turn queries the System clock on the motherboard. User interacts with the computer through the OS then OS interprets inputs given by a user through the Keyboard, Mouse or other input device and takes appropriate actions.

Command Prompt Interface:

Operating System provides a text based interface called command prompt. From the command prompt commands can be issued to perform file and disk management and to run program. Results of these commands are presented to the user as text message.

When we start MS-DOS, we get a symbol on the screen like this

C:\>

This symbol is known as C drive or C-prompt. similarly A:\> is called A-prompt or A drive. Generally A:\ is used as floppy drive i.e. when we are working on floppy disk and C:\ is used for local disk or hard disk. A small blinking bar we see on the screen. This is cursor. It is waiting for your instruction. There few



predefined words for DOS. These are known as DOS-Commands. Our operating system can understand only these predefined commands.

These DOS-Commands are divided into two parts.

1. Internal Commands
2. External Commands

Before we go on detail in these commands, let first we understand a term called File and Directory. A file may be known as container of information on a particular topic. A directory may be considered as a structure or a cabinet which keeps one or more files. Directories are usually creates for keeping one or more identical files together.

What is a File?

In computer terminology, file is a collection of text or data stored on a storage device, such as a Floppy Disk or Hard Disk. Well, a computer file is not much different from a conventional paper file that you must have used, or at least seen being used. Just as you stored different types of documents (invoice, letters, reminders, memos etc.) in conventional files, computer files store information too.

File Name

Every file have a filename which helps to recognize them. these are divided into two parts

1. File name or Primary name
2. Extension or Secondary name

The primary name can be from 1 to 8 characters long. The extension contains 1 to 3 characters long. A filename and extension are separated by using a dot symbol. Thus it's structure looks like

Filename . Extension

Primary name . Secondary Name

The valid characters for giving a file name are from A to Z and the digits are form 0 to 9. Special symbols are ~ ^ % # @ ! _ - { } [] ' `.

Extensions or secondary names are usually used for denoting the type of files or the type of information stored in the file. Like the filename have extension EXE, BAT, COM are respectively Executable, Batch and Command files, which are given high



priority by DOS. Because these files could be directly understood by operating system. Similarly the filename having extension BMP, GIF, JPEG etc. are the extension for graphical files. The files having extension C or CPP are the files of C/C++ language, BAS for BASIC language, PAS for PASCAL programming and so on.

consider the following filename:

REPORT2
PROGRESS.DOC

Here REPORT2 is a filename. This filename does not have an extension name – ‘DOC’. The use of an extension name in a filename is optional. However, the extension name helps in organizing and identifying a file. If you use an extension name with a filename, normally you will have to specify the complete file name (i.e. including the extension name) while using it with DOS commands.

You cannot use other characters, such as coma (,) colon (:), semicolon (;), <, >, \, /, etc. in filename. Moreover, you cannot use space in filenames. Some examples of invalid file names are:

<u>Filename</u>	<u>Reason</u>
SALE 2	Contains space
PROGRESSER	Contains more than eight characters
MY, File	Contains commas
CHAP_01.DOC3	Extension name contains more than 3 characters

If you use more than eight characters in the filename or more than three characters in the extension name, DOS may automatically truncate the filename by removing extra characters. Further, some file names, such as COM 1, COM 2, LPT1, com and



PRN are reserved by DOS for its own use. Therefore, do not use these names to name your file. Also, remember that all DOS application programs including Word, Excel, WordStar, Bbase III PLUS AND Fox Pro follow the same file naming convention.

WHAT IS A Directory?

A directory is nothing but a named section of a storage device, such as hard disk, floppy disk. The directory helps to organize your file in an efficient manner. Using directories in a storage device is similar to keeping different types of files in an office in separate drawers of a filing cabinet. For instant, Xyz Company may keep all sales files in the first drawer, all purchase files in the second drawer and all employees' files in the third drawer of a filing cabinet.

INTERNAL COMMANDS

These commands are automatically loaded into the memory when an operating system is loaded into the memory. Thus these are also called memory-resident commands. The command available are all combined together and are stored in Command.com file, which is an executable command file. These internal commands are further grouped according to their properties. These are as follows.

1. CLS	2. DIR	3. VER
4. VOL	5. DATE	6. TIME
7. COPY CON	8. TYPE	9. COPY
10. REN	11. DEL	12. MD
13. CD	14. RD	

EXTERNAL COMMANDS



External commands are known as Disk residence commands. Because they can be store with DOS directory or any disk which is used for getting these commands. Theses commands help to perform some specific task. These are stored in a secondary storage device. Some important external commands are given below.

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