Tech Info Library

COMMAND.COM: A General Description

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COMMAND.COM is a command interpreter for the ProDOS operating system. When
used in place of BASIC.SYSTEM, it gives an Enhanced Apple IIe, Apple IIc,
or Apple IIgs some of the power of the MS-DOS operating system.

- You can refer to disks by simple abbreviations such as A: or B:, rather
  than having to use ProDOS pathnames (you can still use pathnames if you
  prefer).

- You can run application software by simply typing the name of the program,
  without using RUN, BRUN, or "-" (you can still use "-" if you like). To
  change directories (setting the PREFIX under BASIC.SYSTEM), you can type
  PREFIX pathname, PRE pathname, CHDIR pathname, CD pathname, or just the
  pathname.

- COMMAND.COM adds the he MS-DOS pathing concept to ProDOS. A path is the
  name of a directory that COMMAND.COM will search when you type the command
  to run a file. Normally, only the PREFIX directory is searched, but with
  COMMAND.COM, you can specify up to four additional directories. This
  allows you to run programs stored on other directories, such as a general
  utility directory.

COMMAND.COM lets you set up four environments: CP/M, MS-DOS, ProDOS, and
UNIX. You can configure for the environment that you are most comfortable
with.

COMMAND.COM includes 100 commands. Some are internal, such as the DELETE and
COPY commands. Others are external files that are read in from disk before
execution. COMMAND.COM, like MS-DOS allows a virtually unlimited number of
commands stored as files on disk.

You can use wild cards with commands: for example, typing Copy * B: would
copy all files on the current directory to disk B:. You don't need to know
the name of the current disk or the disk to be copied to; COMMAND.COM
handles that automatically.

COMMAND.COM supports both I/O re-direction and piping. I/O re-direction sends the output of a command to a device other than the one normally used. The TYPE command normally displays the contents of a text file on the screen. With I/O re-direction, the text could be sent to a printer or to another file.

Piping is used to make the output of one command the input to another. For example, the CATALOG command could 'pipe' the catalog of disk files to the SORT command, which would alphabetize the catalog before displaying it.

COMMAND.COM even lets you create commands that don't exist in your operating system -- for example, a command that MOVEs a file from one location to another: not just copying it, but also deleting the original. The MOVE command would be created by combining the COPY, UNLOCK, and DELETE commands. Variables can also be used to assign short (one or two character) names that when typed will run an application program. An example might be typing AW to prefix to the AppleWorks directory and run the file APLWORKS.SYSTEM.

COMMAND.COM includes the following commands:

- Convert any type of file, including AppleWorks Word Processor files, into plain text files.
- Search all directories on a 3.5" disk or hard disk for any file.
- Display all files on a specific disk.
- Search and replace in a variety of formats.
- A picture display command that automatically recognizes all Apple II picture types, including GS pictures.

COMMAND.COM. also supports MS-DOS-style BATCH files. BATCH files are the perfect solution for handling many complex tasks easily and automatically. Running a system application does not effect the BATCH file. One example cited in the manual: a BATCH file can be used to run an application and track elapsed time. At the end of the month, the user can print the text file created by this BATCH file to generate billing information for work done for clients.

COMMAND.COM also includes a full-featured line-oriented text editor.

COMMAND.COM will be available in September 1987 from PinPoint Publishing.

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