11.2.2 File Extension Facts

A complete filename is made up of a file path combined with the name of the file itself. Extensions can be included in a filename to indicate a file type. The extension identifies:

- What the file is
- What it contains
- Which program was used to create and modify the file

The main types of filename systems are:

- Long file names supported with FAT32 allows 255 characters including spaces
- Unicode supported with NTFS allows 255 characters including all characters except for /

You should be familiar with the following file types and their extensions:

File Type	Extension
Program files	.exe .com
Batch files	.bat .sh
System files	.dll (dynamic link library) .drv (device driver) .vxd (virtual device driver)
Document files	.rtf .txt .doc .wpd .ppt .pdf
Image files	.gif .jpg .png .bmp
Audio files	.mp3 .wma
Windows Installer files	.msi
Compressed files	.zip
Script files	.ps1 .vbs .py .js

Be aware of the following:

- Executable files (.exe, .com) are program files that can be run. Batch files (.bat as well as other extensions) also run and execute a series of commands, but typically launch another program to interpret the commands in the batch or script file.
- A file extension association identifies the program that is used to create a file. When you open a file that has an associated program, the program is launched and the file is opened within the program.
- When you install an application, file extension associations are created automatically for the file types the application uses.
- If you try to open a file type that is not associated with a program, you will be prompted to identify the program to use to open the file.
- By default, Windows hides the extension for files with associations.
- Use the settings in Folder Options to show file extensions for known file types.
- To change a program associated with a file extension, use Default Programs in the Control Panel, or edit the properties of the file.