

You are all aware of the filing system used in operating systems. We can create a folder within another folder, and you can place files in the folder. This same logic is followed by Stata. When you first launch Stata, you will be in a directory, but where? To find out, type the following command:

```
pwd
```

The output will tell you where you are. When you work on a project in Stata, you should do what you do when you work on any other project, and that is create a folder in which you save anything related to the current project. I have created such a folder for this course for example. I have a folder on my desktop which I have called “Introduction to Stata”. Inside this folder, I have created another folder which I called “Section 1”, and it is in this folder where I store all files related to the first section of this course. I would now like to tell Stata to go to that folder. To do that I would type the command **cd** followed by the location of the folder which I can get by using the windows address bar:

```
cd "C:\Users\mozahemna.UNIVERSITY\Desktop\Introduction to Stata\Section 1"
```

If I now run the command **pwd** again, I can see that my location has changed. Another useful command is **dir** which lists all files in the folder in which Stata is currently in. If I run the command you can see that the current folder is actually empty. I can also go back one step by telling Stata that I would like to go to the folder “Introduction to Stata” which is actually where the current folder is placed. To do that I run the command:

```
cd ..
```

The output tells me that the current folder has been changed. If I now rerun the **dir** command I can see that the current folder contains a folder named “Section 1”, which I already knew. If I want to go to the folder “Section 1” again, I can type

```
cd "section 1"
```

Stata now tells me that the current directory has been changed. Notice in the above command that I typed the name of the folder name with a small “s” even though the name of the actual folder starts with a capital “S”. Stata is smart enough to know that the folder “section 1” is actually the folder “Section 1”.

Why are folders important? There are two reasons. First, they help you organize your work. However, there is an even more important reason, and that is that Stata needs to know the exact location of any file that I want to use. Remember the dataset that we loaded into Stata in the previous section? The dataset was stored in the “downloads” folder. Currently, I am in a folder names “Section 1” which is in another folder named “Introduction to Stata”, which is stored on the desktop. If I wanted to use the dataset which is named dataset1 and which is currently stored in the “downloads” folder, I will have to use the following command:

```
use "C:\Users\mozahemna.UNIVERSITY\Downloads\dataset1"
```

As you can see, doing this over and over again is boring and a waste of time, and Stata knows this. What would make my life easier is if I saved the dataset in the current folder and used it from there. So I would go to the downloads folder, copy the dataset, and paste it in the folder where I want to do the work. Now, if I run the **dir** command, the output will show me that there is a file named *dataset1.dta*. The *dta* is the extension which Stata uses to save datasets, so whenever a file has an extension of *dta* we automatically know that this is a Stata dataset.

Now that I have the dataset in my current folder, all I need to do is to use it by running this command:

```
use dataset1
```

This is much simpler. To show you some other things that you can do, go back to the folder “Introduction to Stata” by running the command

```
cd ..
```

Now, in order to use the dataset *dataset1* try typing the following:

```
use "section 1\dataset1"
```

What we are practically doing is telling Stata that we want to use the dataset *dataset1* which is located in a folder named “section 1” which is located in the current directory.

There are other command related files that you can use. Stata allows use to copy files, to create folders, and to delete files all from within Stata. I have listed some of these commands in the enclosed PDF document. However, I almost never use these commands because I find it much easier to create folders and move files using the operating system itself. The only directory related commands that I use frequently are **pwd** to know where I am, **dir** to list the contents of the current directory, and **cd** to move to a folder.

Organizing your files is extremely important especially when you end up working on many projects. For example, in order to organize my work for this course, what I did was to create a folder named “Introduction to Stata” on my desktop. In this folder, I created a separate folder for each section of this course. This means that there is a folder named “Section 1”, another one named “Section 2”, and so on. Inside each folder I store all the files related to that section. Since “dataset1” is used in the lectures of section 1, I have included it in the folder “Section 1”. Datasets for other sections are included in the appropriate folder using the same logic. You should make it a habit to organize your work even if you think that the project is going to be small. Sometimes what starts as a small idea might end up turning out into a huge one.