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How to set aliases for the command prompt in Windows

In this article, I would like to share with you a useful way to define aliases for the command prompt. The method described in this article works in all modern Windows versions including Windows 10, Windows 8.1, Windows 8 and Windows 7. By following the steps below, you will be able to define any desired alias to extend the functionality of the default command processor (cmd.exe) and save your time.

RECOMMENDED: Click here to fix Windows errors and optimize system performance

There is a **doskey** command available in the command prompt. Using doskey, it is possible to define an alias for a new or existing console command.
For example, almost all users are familiar with the **cd** command which is used to change the current directory in the command prompt. If the desired directory is located on another drive, you need to use the "/D" switch with the cd command or enter the drive letter in the command prompt explicitly.
For example:

```
d:
cd documents
```

or

```
cd /d d:\documents
```

Using DOSKEY, it is possible to save your time and define an alias which will allow you to omit the requirement to enter the drive letter and the /D switch. For example:

```
doskey cd=cd /D $*
```

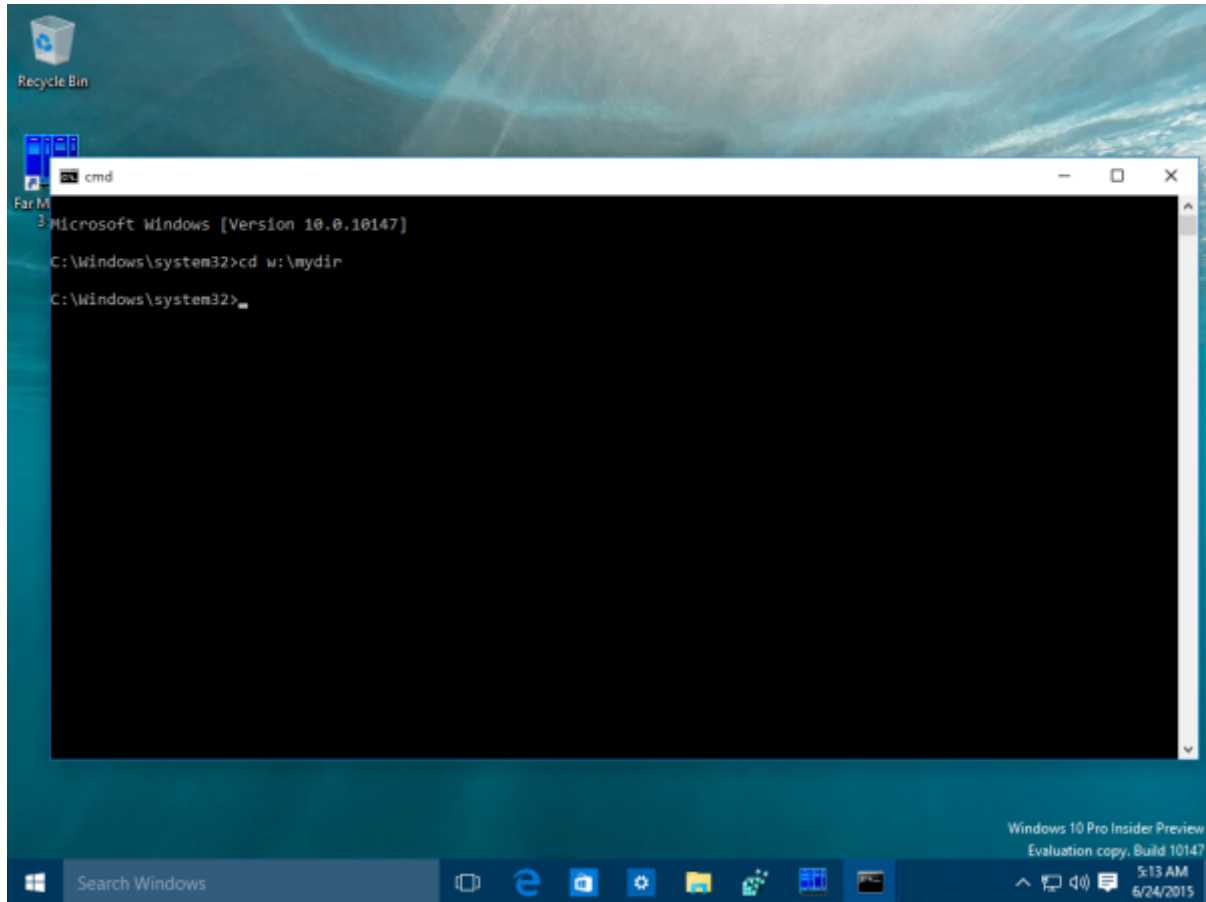The following are some special codes in Doskey macro definitions:

$T Command separator. Allows multiple commands in a macro.

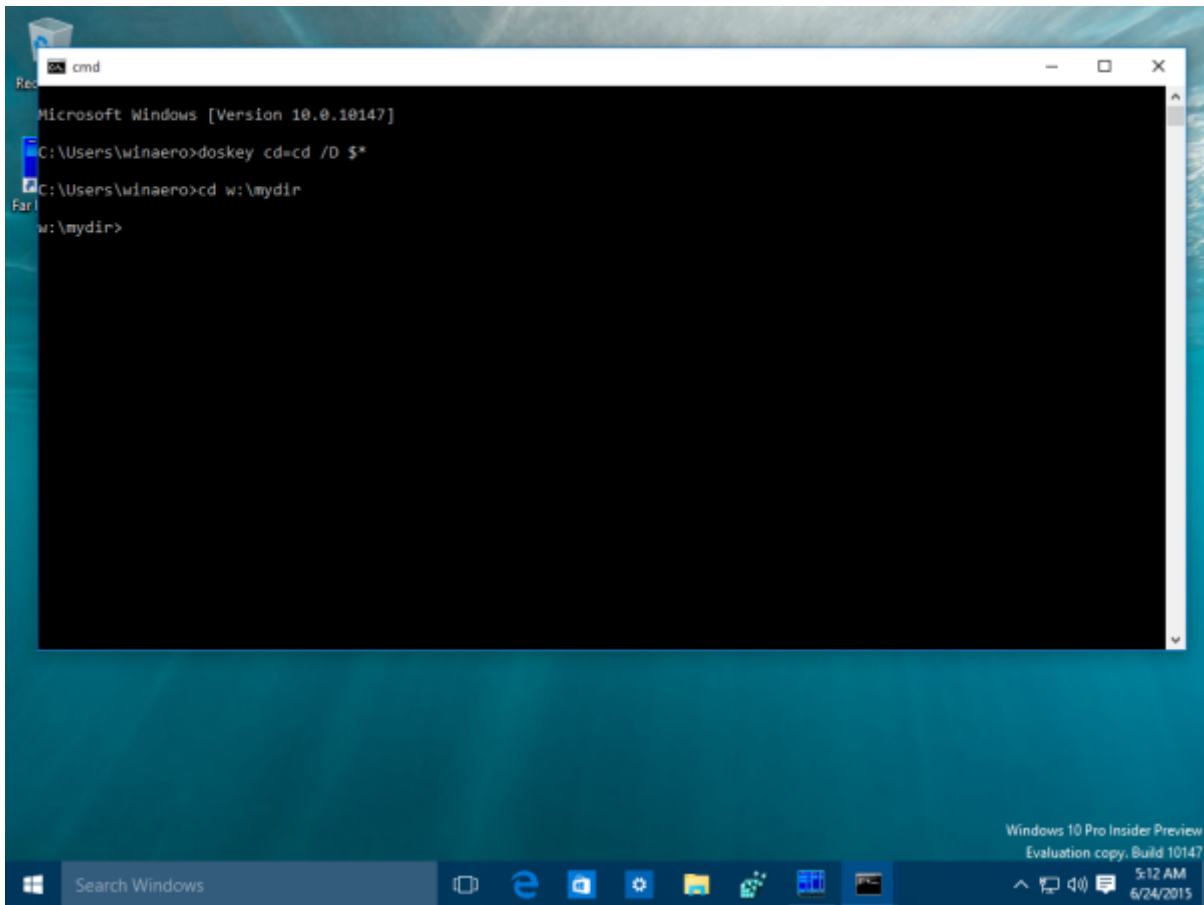$1-$9 Batch parameters. Equivalent to %1-%9 in batch programs.

$* Symbol replaced by everything following the macro name on the command line. We used it in our alias.

Now, we can compare the results without the alias and with the alias.

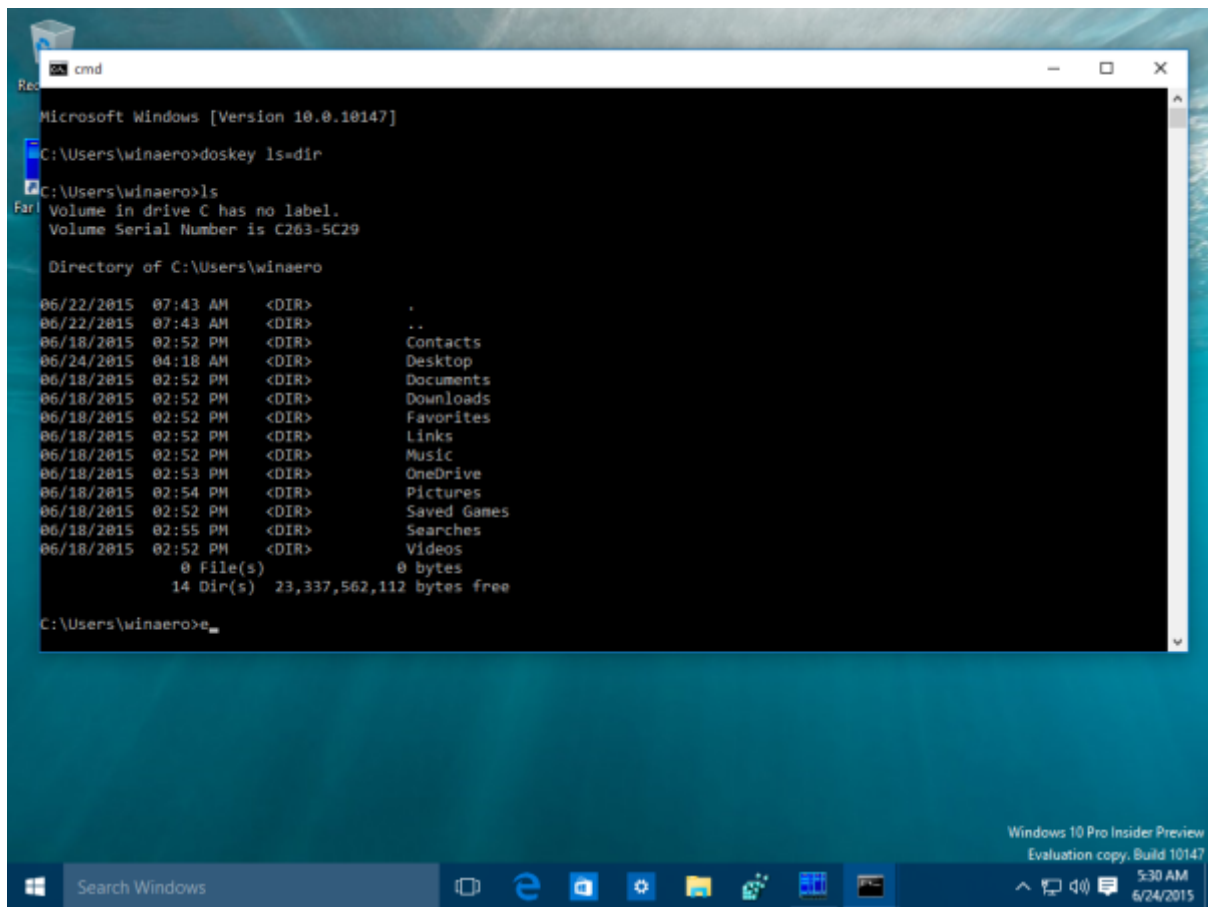Without the alias, the cd command will not change the active drive:

With the alias created with DOSKEY, the command prompt will change the active drive and the current folder automatically:
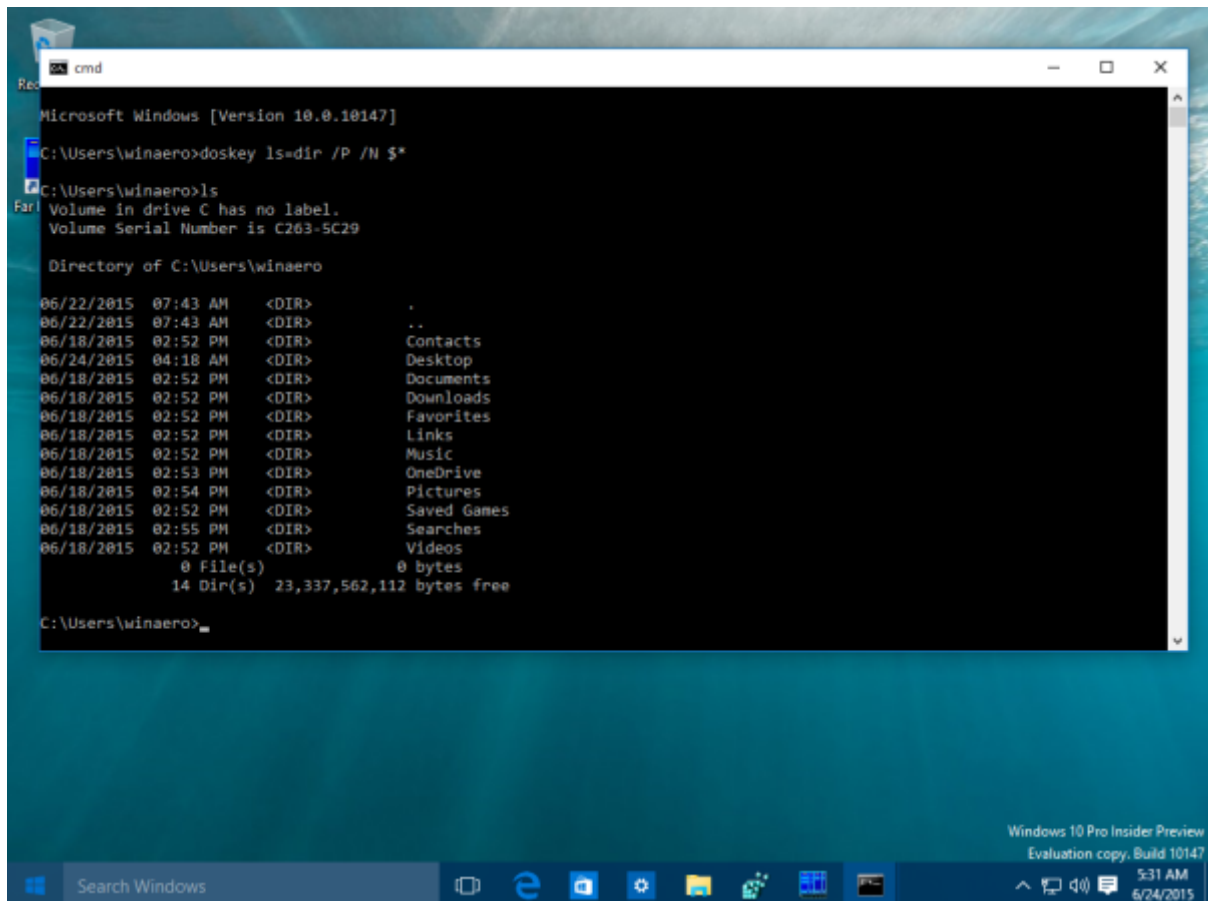
This is very useful.

Using DOSKEY, it is possible to define your own aliases. For example, you can create the LS alias for the DIR command to use a common command for directory listing in Windows and Linux. As you may or may not be knowing, LS is a default file listing command in the Linux operating system.

```
doskey ls=dir
```
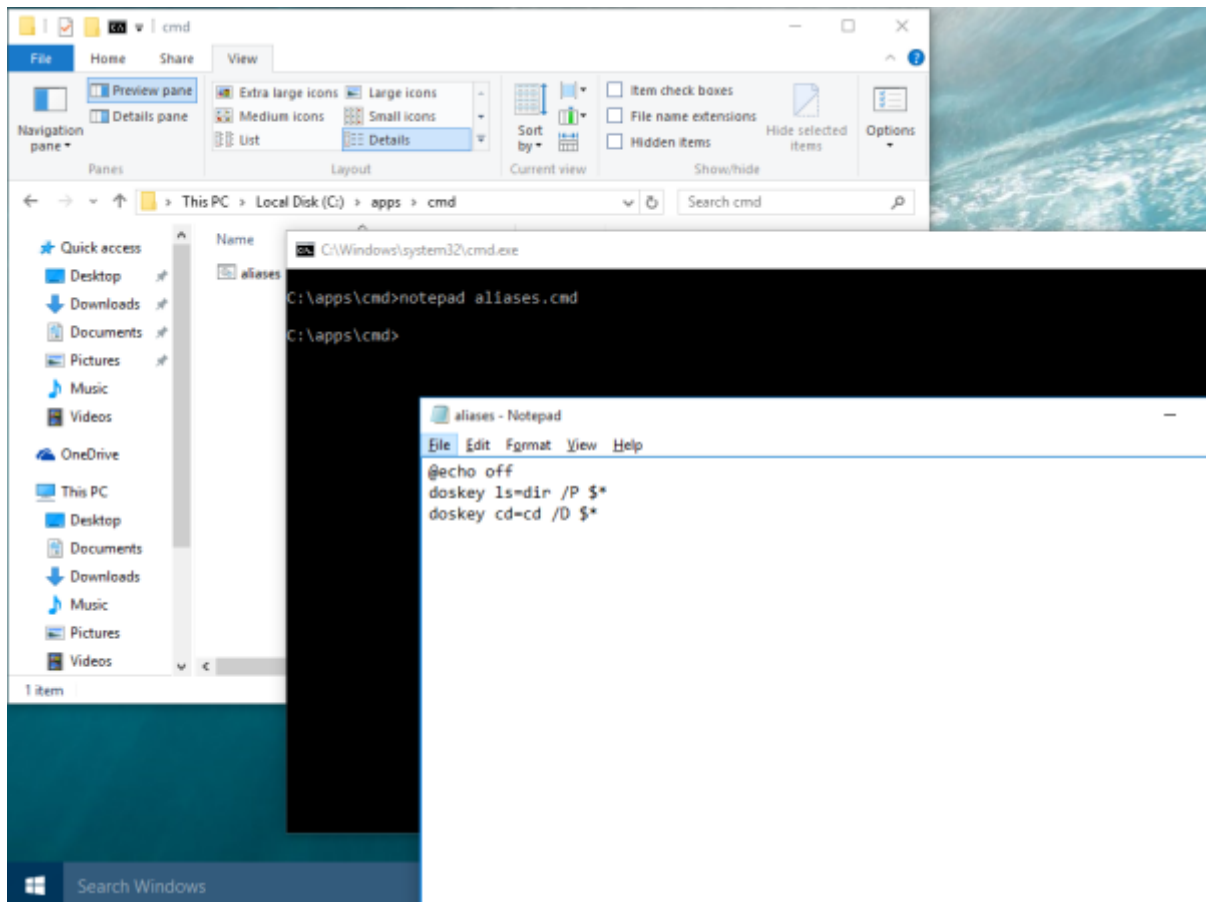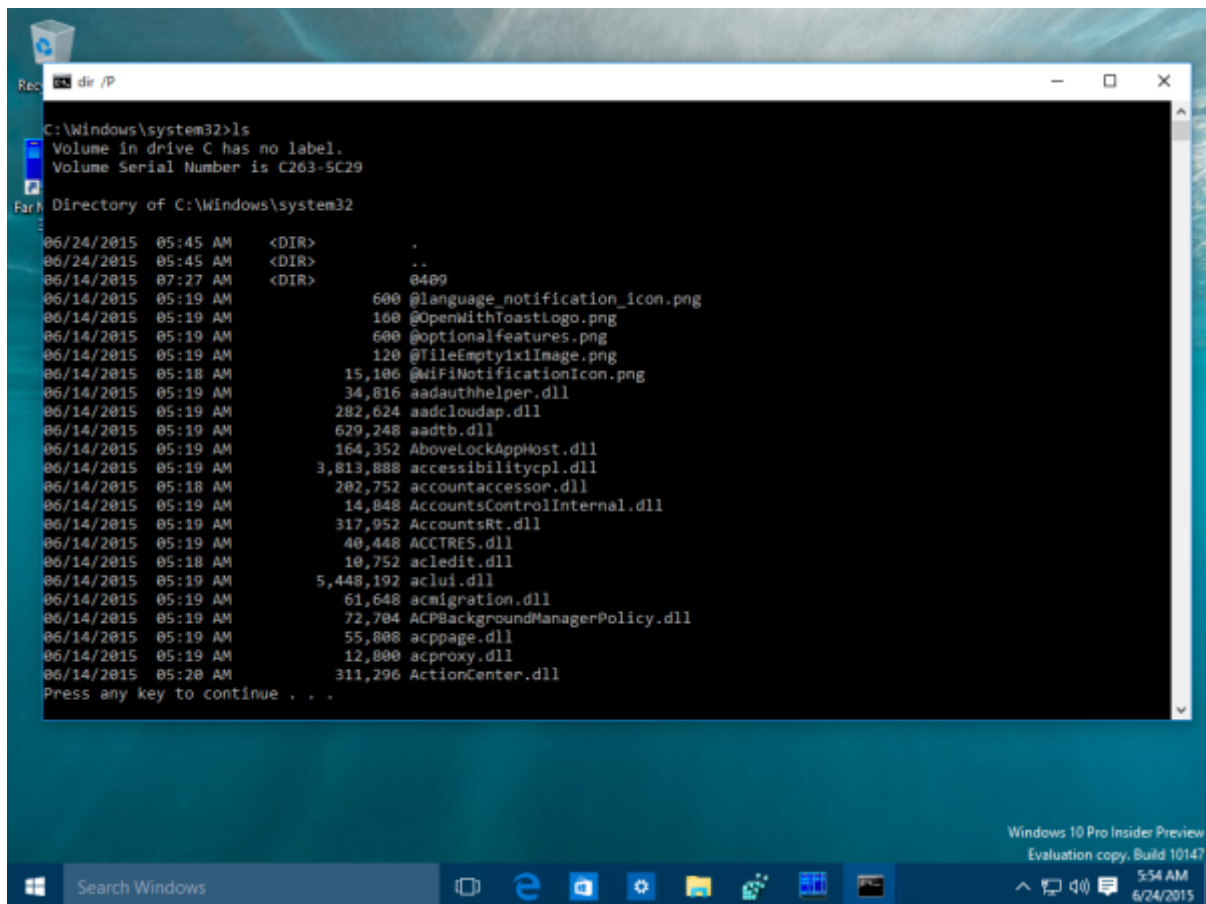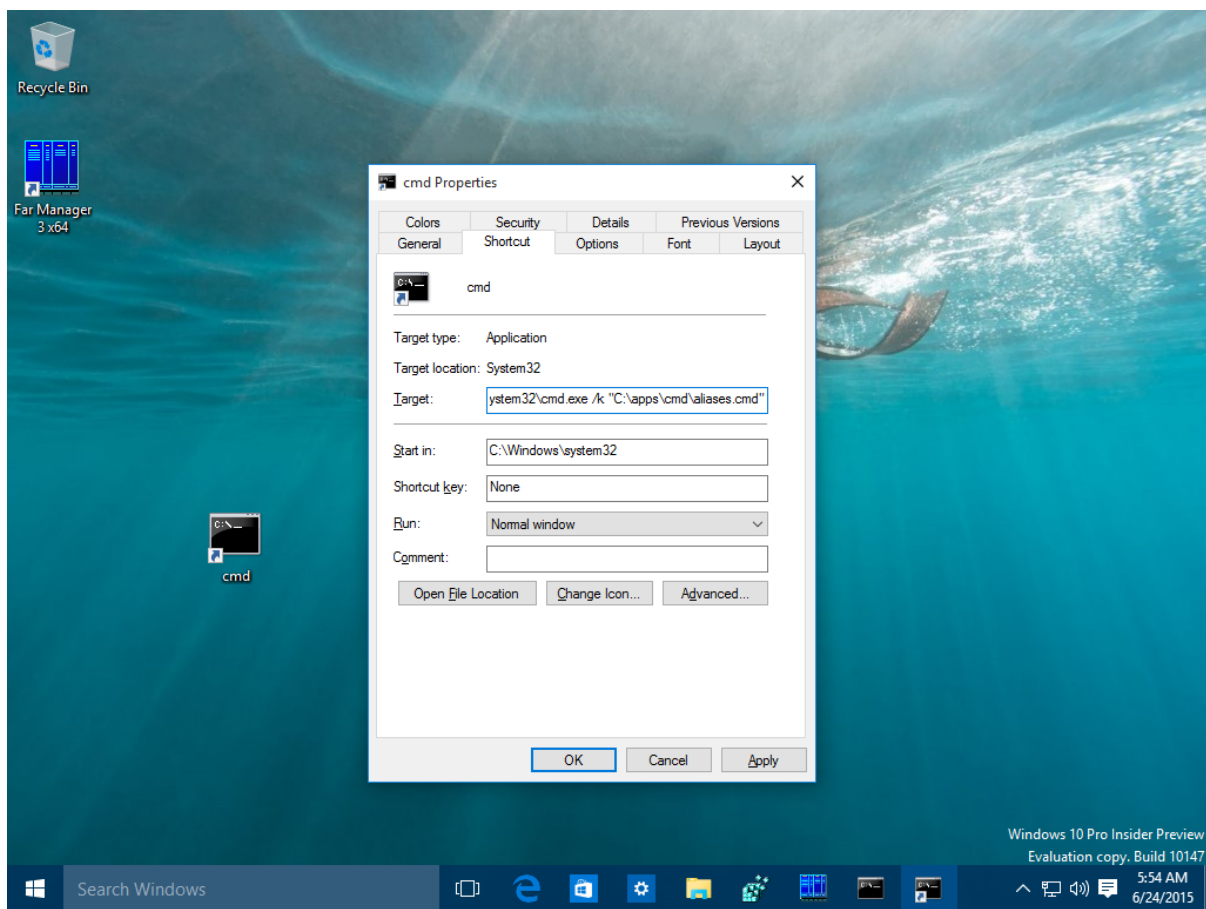
Or something like this:

Define global aliases in the Windows command prompt

The problem with aliases is that they work only for the command prompt instance where you have defined them. To avoid this issue, you can create a new shortcut to cmd.exe or even modify the default one. You need to add the following parameters after the cmd.exe part:

```
cmd.exe /k c:\apps\cmd\aliases.cmd
```

Here the file c:\apps\cmd\aliases.cmd is a regular batch file which contains the appropriate DOSKEY calls.

Besides the command prompt, Windows allows defining your own aliases for the Run dialog as well. Refer to the following article: Launch your favorite apps with useful aliases from the Run dialog

That's it. This is a very useful way to define your own command or change the behavior of default commands. I am using these aliases since a very long time. What about you? Are you using aliases in the command prompt or were you not aware of this feature?

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This entry was posted in Windows and tagged command prompt, command prompt aliases, doskey command alias on June 24, 2015 by Sergey Tkachenko.

About Sergey Tkachenko

Sergey Tkachenko is a software developer from Russia who started Winaero back in 2011. On this blog, Sergey is writing about everything connected to Microsoft, Windows and popular software. Follow him on Facebook, Twitter or Google+.

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2 thoughts on "How to set aliases for the command prompt in Windows"

glenn

A very nice effort on your part. This is really excellent documentation. I recommend it for those who tend to keep their fingers on the keyboard.

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Sergey Tkachenko Post author

thanks

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