



Productivity Hint 7.2

Batch Files and Shell Scripts

If you need to perform the same tasks repeatedly on the command line, then it is worth learning about the automation features offered by your operating system.

Under Windows, you use batch files to execute a number of commands automatically. For example, suppose you need to test a program by running three testers:

```
java BankTester1
java BankTester2
java BankTester3 < input1.txt
```

Then you find a bug, fix it, and run the tests again. Now you need to type the three commands once more. There has to be a better way. Under Windows, put the commands in a text file and call it `test.bat`:

File `test.bat`

```
1 java BankTester1
2 java BankTester2
3 java BankTester3 < input1.txt
```

Then you just type

```
test.bat
```

and the three commands in the batch file execute automatically.

Batch files are a feature of the operating system, not of Java. On Linux, Mac OS, and UNIX, shell scripts are used for the same purpose. In this simple example, you can execute the commands by typing

```
sh test.bat
```

There are many uses for batch files and shell scripts, and it is well worth it to learn more about their advanced features, such as parameters and loops.
