MICROSOFT DISK OPERATING SYSTEM (MS DOS)

It is an operating system which has commands (languages) that are type on the keyboard to enable the computer to understand. The commands are typed at the Dos prompt (a place where there is Drive A or C)

How to start Ms Dos from the computer.

Procedure
   a. Click the start button
   b. Move to programs
   c. Move to Ms. Dos Prompt and click or move to accessories and then move to Ms. Dos prompt and click.

There are two categories of Ms. Dos commands
   a. Internal commands.
   b. External commands.

INTERNAL COMMANDS

These commands are based in the computer memory and reside there until the computer is switched off.

When the computer is on they are loaded into the disk. They are also referred to as memory based commands.

These commands include;

CLS – (clear the screen) used to clear the screen.

DATE – This command displays the system the system date and gives a chance to change the date.

VER – (Version) This command displays the version of Microsoft Dos installed in your computer.

VOL – (Volume) This command displays the volume, label and serial number of a drive.

DEL (Delete) This command is used for erasing files.

Syntax [be at the location of the file] del [file name]

Dir – (displays) this command displays the contents of a drive (that is all files and directories)

Note that when you use the command DIR the directories will be denoted at the end with the <DIR>.

EXTERNAL COMMANDS

They are commands which reside on high speed disk e.g. the hard disk or floppy disk. They are also called utility commands or disk based commands.

THE COPY CON

This is used in creating of files

Syntax copy con (file name)

Note: Your must be at the point in a directory that you want to contain that file.

TYPE Used to display the context of a file

Syntax at the location of a file issue the command type (file name)

Copy: This command has two functions:

a) Used to transfer files from one location to another

Syntax [be sure you are at the location of the file] copy [file name]

Specify where the file had to be taken starting with the root director
e.g. A:\copy Ann C:\windows.
b) It is also used for combining files
Note: Be sure you are where the files are located.
Syntax A:\copy Ann Joy (new file name)

REN – (rename) Used for changing a file name
Syntax A:\REN (current file name) (new file name)

EDIT used to modify the content of a file
Syntax [at the location of a file] type edit [name of the file]
This takes you to a window with file editing features. Used the alt key to activate the various menus and press the highlighted letter to select a desired function.

SWITCHES TO BE USED WITH THE DIR COMMAND
A switch is just a character that you can insert after a command to manipulate the display on the screen.

Switch P (pause mode) Used to display the content of a drive while pausing every screen.
Syntax DIR/B Used to display the contents of a drive on the left side of the screen.
Switch W (wide format mode) Used to display the contents of a drive a cross the screen.
Syntax DIR/W

Switch L (lower case) Displays the content of a drive in lower case, that is small letters
Syntax Dir/L

Switch O (sort order) Displays the content of a drive alphabetically.
Syntax DIR/O

For the order command to wok properly you must specify to Dos switch mode to follow in sorting E.G.

Switch N will display the files alphabetically arranged from Z-A
Syntax Dir/O: N

Switch E will arrange the extensions alphabetically.
Syntax DIR/O: E

Switch D displays the directories of files alphabetically as per the date of their making
Syntax DIR/O: D

FORMATTING
To format is to prepare your drive for data inputting. During formatting tracks and sectors are drawn on your storage media. The command should be issued at a different drive from the one you intend to format.

Syntax C:\>format A:

PARAMETERS ASSCOCIATED WITH FORMAT COMMAND

We can use switches to manipulate the computer to format our drive as per our choices e.g. Syntax C:\>format A:/S – used to transfer system files to the formatted disk. The system files transferred area:
1. Input, output system (sys)
2. Ms – Dos system (ms dos. Sys)
3. Commands. Com

Syntax format A:/B – used for creating a blank space for the system files.

Syntax C:\>format A:/C – used for check clusters that are currently marked bad.

Syntax C:\>format A/V – used for giving volume label automatically at a command line e.g. C:\> A:/V name (here type the volume label)

Syntax C:\>format A:\U – This is called unconditional format, it destroys all the existing data and prevents you from using the unformatted command.

Syntax C:\>format A:/F when this switch „F" is used you must specify the size of the drive you are formatting e.g. C:\>format A/F1. 44mb.

The other variant of the format command is the unformatted. These external command restores what was lost when formatting.

WILD CARDS
These are symbols that denote other characters in Dos.
They are mainly two:
a) The asterisk (*) denotes many characters
b) The question mark (?) denotes one character

ASTERIK
It has two functions:
1. Displays files with specific extensions e.g. DIR *txt displays files with extensions txt no matter the number of characters in the suffix.
2. Displays files which start with specific characters e.g. DIR C*.* displays a files that start with letter C.

QUESTION MARK
Used to display files that have certain number of the characters. Each question mark represents a character. E.g. DIR????? Displays files that have a maxim characters f five.

FILES
A file is a collection of related data. It comprises characters and allows maximum characters. A file contains a file name (prefix) and a file extension (suffix). A file is allowed a maximum of 8 characters and an extension of 3 characters. A file name can contain both alphabet and numerical. Such a file name is called alphanumeric file.
CATEGORIES OF FILES
SYSTEM FILES: They are denoted by the extension (SYS). They contain the hardware instructions which the computer used to manage and work with a particular hardware device e.g. of a system file Himem.sys. This file enables the computer to manage the extended memory.

BATCH FILES: They are denoted by extension (BAT). They contain commands that carried off or executed as a set e.g. of a batch file – Autoexec. Bat this contains command such as date, time etc.

PROGRAMME FILES: They are denoted by extensions (.com or .ext). They contain programme files which enable the computer to run an application e.g. Keyb.exe – it contain a programme that tell the computer how to utilize the keyboard.

SPECIALIZED DATA FILES: These have a wide range of extensions. They resultas user works with as application e.g. txt for text, dbf for database etc.

Also we have valid characters and invalid characters when naming files.

Invalid characters	valid characters
Comma,	@ at sign
Question mark?	% sign
Semi-colon:	$ dollar sign
Full colon:	! exclamation mark
Greater than >	# number sing etc.
Less than sign <	Any alphabetical character
Plus sign + e.t.c. any numerical number	

NB: Never give your files names or extensions similar to those used or given to the program/system files.

TREE

This is a way of arranging related data in DOS. The data is arranged in root directories, directories, sub-directories and files.

The commands used in tree formation are;

1. MD (make directory) used to remind the computer there"s a directory waiting to be created.
2. CD (change directory) Used to change from one working directory into another so as to put a sub-directory or a file.
3. CD.. used to take us one step behind
4. CD\takes us straight to the root directory
5. RD (remove directory) used to erase a directory.

NB: The directory must be existing; the directory to be erased must be empty. You must be behind it before giving the command.

Example of a tree