**Terminal Basics**

Part of the journey of growing into a skilled programmer is about becoming proficient with the tools we have at our disposal. The terminal is something you will use in your everyday programming. It provides a text based way to interact with our computers. You may find the terminal initially intimidating to use because of the fact that all commands must be entered as text. Once we get over this initial learning curve, we'll discover the terminal as our most powerful tool!

Let's go over the basics. There are a few differences between this tool on Mac and Windows environments; we'll be sure to highlight these differences as we go. On Mac we use the **Terminal**, while on Windows we use the **Command Prompt**. Both applications are analogous and you can launch them normally by searching your apps.

**Essential Terminology**

* directory - same as a folder; a directory can contain many files or subdirectories
* root - the outermost, main directory; opening a fresh terminal typically brings you into the root directory
* path - location on your computer specified by directories. /Desktop/photos/cats.jpeg is an example of a path

**Basic Terminal Navigation**

A new Mac Terminal will greet you with:

~ $

**MAC Navigation**

* ls - lists all the files in the current directory
* cd [path] - changes the current directory to the directory specified by the path argument

To navigate through directories in the command line, we need to specify which directories to go through. Let's say we are in the root directory and want to navigate into a directory we have on our Desktop (photos). We need to first go into the Desktop directory, and then go into photos.

~ $ ls

Applications Desktop

Documents Downloads

Library Movies

Music Pictures

~ $ cd Desktop

~ Desktop $ ls

photos lectures

memes projects

~ Desktop $ cd photos

~ photos $ ls

cats.jpeg hey\_programmers.gif

Notice, after we navigate to a new folder using cd, the current path before the $ changed to reflect that. Test this out in your Terminal. Note that if you on windows you use dir to show current directions, not ls.

**Directory Shortcuts**

Use the command cd .. to go back to the previous directory. If we are in the photos directory on our Desktop, and want to go back to the Desktop:

~ photos $ cd ..

~ Desktop $

Use the command cd (by itself) to go back to the root directory instantly:

~ bootcamp\_prep $ cd

~ $

Those are the basics of navigating the terminal! We'll trickle in more commands as we move forward, but you'll use ls/dir and cd the most.

**Windows PC Command Prompt**

A new Windows Command Prompt will greet you with:

C:\>

Everything before the > for PCs is the current directory.

**PC Navigation**

* dir - lists all the files in the current directory
* cd [path] - changes the current directory to the directory specified by the path argument

Commands typically operate in the current directory. For example, the dir command for Windows will list all the files in the current directory. The output of this command will be different depending on which directory you are in.

To navigate through directories in the command line, we need to specify which directories to go through. Let's say we are in the root directory and want to navigate into a directory we have on our Desktop (photos). We need to first go into the Desktop directory, and then go into photos..

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