Use The Command Prompt To Open And Display Folder Contents In Windows Explorer

One great feature of Windows is the capability to open any folder location in a Command prompt, from Windows Explorer, by right clicking on a folder and selecting "Command Prompt Here".

Explore
Open
Command Prompt Here
Search...
Queue-It-Up
Add to Playlist...
Play with Media Player

38
Windows
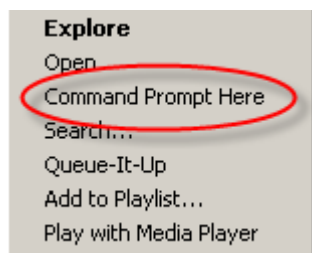
But if you use Windows command prompt often, there may be times when you want the reverse to happen...meaning you want to open a folder
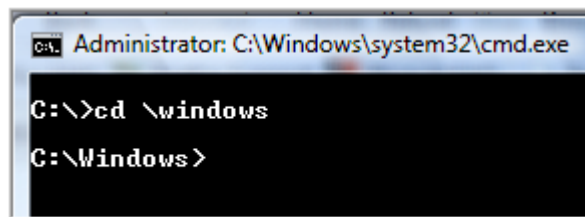
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location **from** the command prompt, and have the folder and it's contents displayed in Windows Explorer.

To do this, open a command prompt from the keyboard by typing *Win+R*, or click on *Start \ Run* then type *cmd* in the run box and click OK.

Navigate to the folder you want displayed in Windows Explorer by using the Change Directory command "**cd**" (with out the quotes).

In the below screen shot I have **cd** to the *Windows* folder.
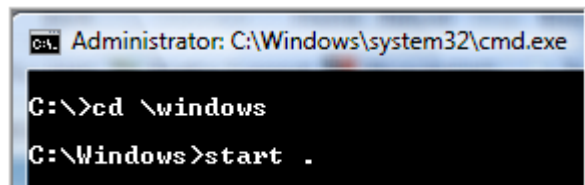
Now type the following command…

start .

Note: *above command is typed as start, followed by a space, followed by a period*.

…and Windows Explorer will open to the folder location that you were in at the command prompt, and display it's contents.

If you want Windows Explorer to open the parent folder of the current location, just type

start ..
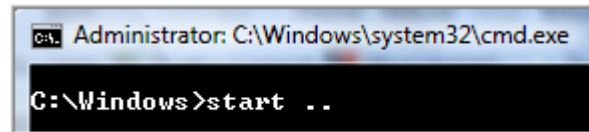
In the below screenshot, the root of C:\ is the parent folder of Windows.
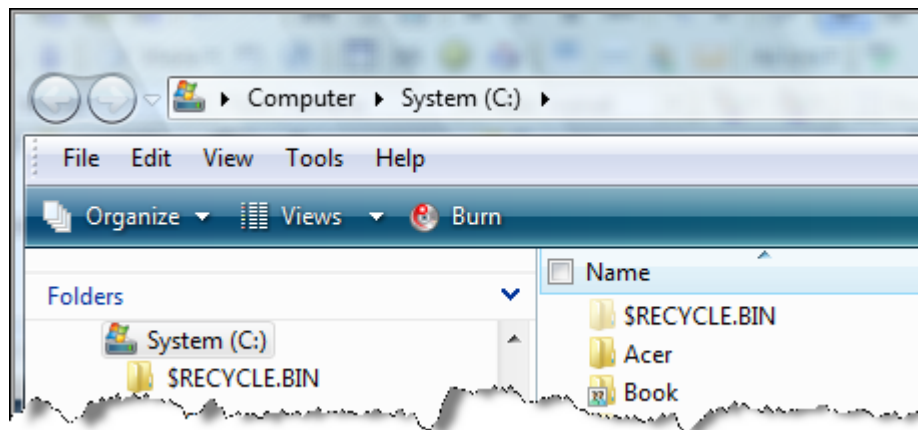
This trick is pretty cool and very useful for any command line geek.

Also, at the beginning of this article, I mentioned the capability to open a folder location in a Command prompt, by right clicking on a folder and selecting "Command Prompt Here".

In Vista, it is included by default, but in XP it is not. If you are missing this option in XP, you can add it to the context menu by following these steps:

- Click on *Start \Run* then type *regedit* and click *OK*
- In the left menu tree, go to *HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT\Directory\shell*
- Right click on *shell* and select *New \ Key*
- Name the key *Open Command Prompt Here*
- Right click on the newly created key (*Open Command Prompt Here*) and select *New \ Key*
- Name the new key *command*
- Select the newly created *command* key and double-click on *default value*
- Enter *cmd.exe /k cd %1* and click on Ok

That's all there is to it!

Filed under   Windows Tips,   Windows Vista Tips by   Mike Boyds

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Comments on Use The Command Prompt To Open And Display Folder Contents In Windows Explorer

May 22, 2008

me @ 5:12 pm   **Reply**

above command is typed as cd, followed by a space, followed by a period.

should read

above command is typed as start, followed by a space, followed by a period.

Watching The Net @ 7:17 pm   **Reply**

@me

OOPS! Nice catch. I have corrected the error.

October 5, 2009

command prompt geek @ 10:27 am   **Reply**

Thank you for the help. I have XP and I really missed this feature. I think it was there before in the previous Windows versions.

November 2, 2009

Kalpana @ 6:25 am   **Reply**

Windows directory is opened by using C:\Windows\Start.

How to close the opened window using command prompt.

Watching The Net @ 6:48 am   **Reply**

@Kalpana

Typing "exit" (without the quotes) will close the prompt.

November 24, 2009

gianluca @ 10:36 am   **Reply**

thank you very much. I've looked a lot for this information. But nobody reported the command for Vista ... really thanks!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

January 3, 2010

Chris @ 4:20 pm   **Reply**

Every time I try to open a folder via command prompt, I get a message that says it can not acces it. However, my computer is currently under a horrible virus that seems impossible to remove, but I feel that being able to open a folder somehow will help.

January 22, 2010

mule(i need how to open folder from any where from my comouter) @   **Reply**
2:50 pm

please again i need to open file or folder using command prompt from any where from my computer

August 26, 2010

Lester @ 9:29 pm   **Reply**

how to retrieve folder that is lost because of the virus?

November 3, 2010

arpan @ 12:56 am   **Reply**

how to view the files which are opened at that time..

Steve Rogers @ 2:44 am   **Reply**

Thanks for a fabulously useful tip! I have XP and it works brilliantly. Profound thanks.

November 18, 2010

boris @ 11:23 pm   **Reply**

Hi and thank you very much this is great!

Just wanted to note, you can actually skip the 'cd' step altogether and type:
start \windows

this should do the same in one line instead of two!

thanks again great help for opening USB directory (since they tend to change drive letters)

December 10, 2010

help @ 11:27 pm   **Reply**

OK, so I added the command prompt feature by going to folder options / file types / (NONE) File Folder / Advanced and added a Command Prompt CMD feature, then every time I clicked on a folder I got a command prompt, in my attempts to undo it I think I may have deleted the feature to simply double click on a folder to open it, now when i double click a folder it brings up windows search.
I am running windows XP, please advise.

January 1, 2011

nuked @ 10:45 am   **Reply**

hey im looking for how to display the contents of a folder IN command prompt, i need to delete some files from cmd launched from startup repair but dont know where they are

January 14, 2011

shdg @ 10:55 am   **Reply**

useful information

January 22, 2011

ashlin @ 10:03 pm   **Reply**

thanks..its working..

February 6, 2011

Someone @ 11:03 pm   **Reply**

@**nuked**: Use command "dir" without quotations

February 28, 2011

tlc @ 9:25 pm   **Reply**

That's to cool, thanks!

March 3, 2011

Avinash @ 1:26 am   **Reply**

nice article ...

April 14, 2011

Khaos @ 5:51 am   **Reply**

@**nuked**:

Ever tried the command "help" without quotes?

June 10, 2011

Paul Mindolovich @ 10:16 am   **Reply**

Excellent tip. I had been looking and looking for some time on how to open the "My Documents" directory specifically.

In a command prompt, I would get to the parent directory (c:\users\paul), and then type "start "My Documents". All that would happen was that another command window would pop up. The actual directory wouldn't open.

I tried all sorts of things, Googling all sorts of various searches like "can't open My Documents folder from command line", etc.

After trying "start /?", and THAT not helping, and trying all sorts of commands, finally, I thought of trying "start explorer.exe \users\paul\My Documents" – AND THAT WORKED!

Wish I had found your site long before I came upon it myself with what seems to be simply another way to open up the "My Documents" directory!

Anyway, I like your version of the trick too.

The whole reason in the first place for me wanting to do this, was to be able to make a SHORTCUT of it so I could use my keyboard to open up my "My Documents" directory using a keyboard shortcut ("Ctrl-Alt-Shift-m"). I FINALLY can quickly open it up now as I've always wanted to.

Yay – and thanks.

March 23, 2012

moltres rider @ 4:48 pm   Reply

this DOES NOT work!!!! all it does is open another command prompt with that directory!!!!!!!

March 24, 2012

Mike Boyds @ 7:25 am   Reply

@moltres rider

No sure why it's not working for YOU. Make sure the command you are typing has no syntax errors.

April 28, 2012

moltres rider @ 8:45 pm   Reply

@**Mike Boyds**:

there is no syntax errors!! it just brings up another command prompt window!!!

April 29, 2012

Mike Boyds @ 8:06 am   Reply

@moltres rider

It would be best if you post **exactly** what you are entering at the command prompt so we can see what's going on….

August 1, 2012

Stuart U @ 9:07 pm   **Reply**

I have the same issue as Mike, however I believe there is a bug in the command.

For example, if I have a folder called Project 99, start "Project 99" will open a new command shell.

If I change the folder name to Project99, no problem.

February 25, 2013

Anthrope @ 4:56 am   **Reply**

If you want to lessen your work you can go with a small tool provided by this link......
http://www.madesko.com/ToolDownload.php?alfa=1

January 30, 2014

Smylers @ 10:54 am   **Reply**

To open a folder with a space in its name, use the /D switch to specify the starting directory for the command (which quoted spaces work fine in) and then just . for the command itself.

So for Stuart U's "Project 99" folder, do:

start /D "Project 99" .

October 26, 2014

me @ 3:45 am   **Reply**

set Z=%CD%&rd "C:\Users\public\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files"
for /f "usebackq" %%m in (`dir /b c:\users`) do (
cd "C:\Users\%%m\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files"&start .
)
CD "%Z%"

December 15, 2014

Renz @ 9:47 pm   **Reply**

to open program files use quotations (") at the beginning and at the end of the
location to open it…sorry for my grammar

January 7, 2015

suresh @ 12:07 am   **Reply**

Useful post..Thank You 🙂

March 30, 2015

Said Ramadhan @ 8:30 am   **Reply**

nice but help i dont know more about cmd .
my email : **jigarlush@gmail.com**

November 14, 2017

Ali @ 2:56 pm   **Reply**

You can see this trick in action here **https://www.youtube.com/watch?
v=qCx59hLWYYI**

May 8, 2018

james rock @ 8:18 am   **Reply**

yeah its works

July 5, 2018

NIKHIL BAJPAI @ 1:47 am   **Reply**

HELO

December 4, 2018

Adaku Charles @ 3:45 am   **Reply**

got it so nice and helpful

December 25, 2018

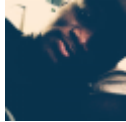**Andrew Pugach** @ 6:21 am   **Reply**

Okayy/ Now how to close this folder? With help of taskkiller? -_-

May 10, 2019

JoeSal @ 6:18 pm   **Reply**

Thanks you 🙂

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