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Setting and getting Windows environment variables from the command prompt?

Asked 9 years, 10 months ago Active 3 months ago Viewed 552k times



220



I want to set an environment variable from the command prompt and then be able to access it globally (for instance, I should see it by going to System -> Environment Variables).

When I use the set command, it isn't accessible in a new cmd session.



```
set NEWVAR=SOMETHING
echo %NEWVAR%
```

51

Related questions:

- [Is there any command line tool that can be used to edit environment variables in Windows?](#)
- [Setting multiple environment variables in a shell spawned via windows batch script](#)

windows

command-line

environment-variables

edited Aug 23 '18 at 16:03



Peter Mortensen

8,587 16 62 85

asked Dec 6 '09 at 21:52



Shane

1,470 5 15 18

1 setx variable value - then restart Command Prompt – [Andrew](#) Aug 2 '17 at 19:34

6 Answers

▲ To make the environment variable accessible globally you need to set it in the registry. As you've realised by just using:

252

set NEWVAR=SOMETHING

▼ you are just setting it in the current process space.



According to [this page](#) you can use the [setx](#) command:

setx NEWVAR SOMETHING

setx is built into Windows 7, but for older versions may only be available if you install the [Windows Resource Kit](#)

edited Aug 16 '12 at 22:56



nhinkle ♦

30.6k

32

128

170

answered Dec 6 '09 at 21:58



ChrisF

38.9k

15

90

142

4 Note that you need to specify quota, for example : setx JAVA_HOME "C:\Program Files\Java\jdk1.7.0_45" will work. But setx JAVA_HOME C:\Program Files\Java\jdk1.7.0_45 will give you syntax errors – [MD. Mohiuddin Ahmed](#) Oct 22 '15 at 9:00

6 @MD.MohiuddinAhmed That's because there are spaces in the path. – [ChrisF](#) Oct 22 '15 at 9:15

▲ We can also use "setx var variable /M" to set the var to system environment variable level instead of user level.

36

Note: This command should be run as administrator.

edited Nov 23 '16 at 17:24



music2myear

33.8k

11

63

110

answered Aug 26 '14 at 10:37



Minh Chau

371

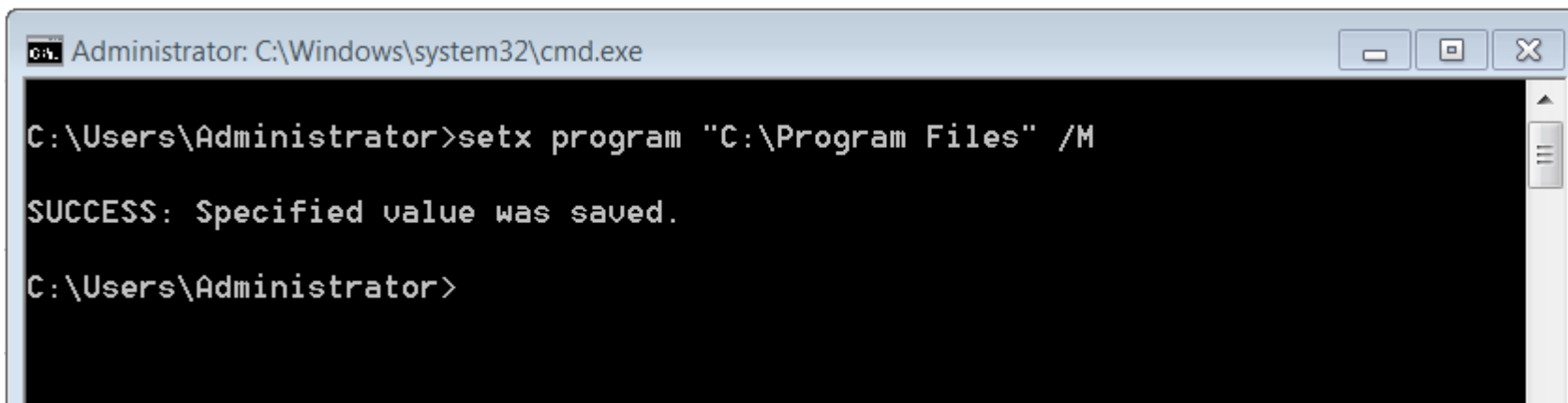
3

2

▲ setx program "C:\Program Files" /M

11

/M for set system environment variable level instead of user level like [@Minh Chau](#) answer



```
Administrator: C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe

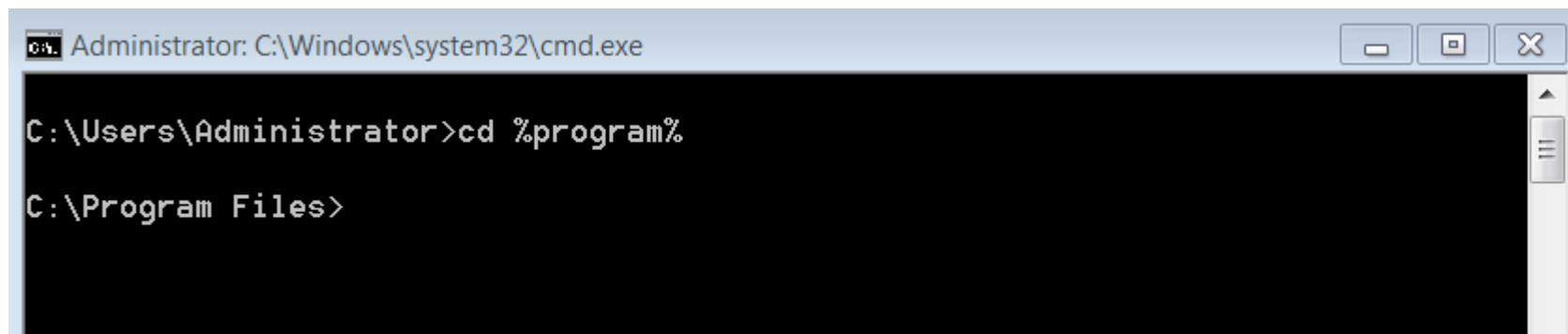
C:\Users\Administrator>setx program "C:\Program Files" /M

SUCCESS: Specified value was saved.

C:\Users\Administrator>
```

Test

RESTART command line (if you don't restart command line, environment variable will not work)



```
Administrator: C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe

C:\Users\Administrator>cd %program%

C:\Program Files>
```

edited Feb 9 '17 at 13:12

answered Feb 8 '17 at 14:54

 **Phan Van Linh**
211 2 4

This duplicates another answer and adds no new content. Please don't post an answer unless you actually have something new to contribute. – [DavidPostill](#) ♦ Feb 9 '17 at 10:23

8 @DavidPostill my answer have a new is we need restart command line. I think it is important – [Phan Van Linh](#) Feb 9 '17 at 13:14

▲ You can use `setx env var [/M]` as mentioned above. If it doesn't take effect you can use `refreshenv` to refresh environment variables. You don't have to restart your computer, explorer.exe or your command prompt to do that.

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▼ Edit: apparently `refreshenv` doesn't come naturally with Windows, so here's the source: <https://pastebin.com/1fJqA0pT>
Save as RefreshEnv.cmd and place it in a folder that's included in your PATH environment variables

edited Jul 8 at 14:33

answered Nov 13 '18 at 19:42

DFSFOT
21 4

1 +1 for mentioning 'refreshenv' - I'd never come across that before! – Francis Norton Mar 1 at 15:27

▲ System variables can be set through CMD and registry For ex. **reg query**
"HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\Session Manager\Environment" /v PATH

1

▼ All the commonly used CMD codes and system variables are given here: [Set Windows system environment variables using CMD](#).

Open CMD and type **Set**

You will get all the values of system variable.

Type **set java** to know the path details of java installed on your window OS.

answered Mar 9 '17 at 5:06

Himanshu Singh
11 1

Please read the question again carefully. Your answer does **not** answer the original question. – DavidPostill ♦ Mar 9 '17 at 13:39

It's close, though. Using REG ADD may accomplish this? – TOOGAM Mar 10 '17 at 9:05

▲ I want to add that if you are using the `/s` parameter with `setx` in order to set environment variables on a remote computer, the "Remote Registry" service needs to be running on the target machine or else you will receive a "ERROR: The specified operation could not be performed" error.

10/22/2019

Setting and getting Windows environment variables from the command prompt? - Super User

0

"registry" service needs to be running on the target machine or else you will receive a "ERROR: The specified operation could not be completed."



(I have asked Microsoft to update their [TechNet article on setx](#) to include this information.)

answered May 18 '17 at 19:35



Tim Bailen

61 3

protected by [Community](#) ♦ Jun 8 at 2:28

Thank you for your interest in this question. Because it has attracted low-quality or spam answers that had to be removed, posting an answer now requires 10 [reputation](#) on this site (the [association bonus](#) does not count).

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