

DOS – XCOPY COMMAND

Syntax:

```
XCOPY [d:][path]filename [d:][path][filename] [/A] [/D:(date)]  
[/E] [/M] [/P] [/S] [/V] [/W] [Y|-Y]
```

Purpose: Copies directories, subdirectories, and files.

Discussion

XCOPY copies files or groups of files to and from directories. Especially useful for copying data to and from a fixed disk.

The first path designation specifies the source file(s); the second path designation specifies the target file(s). A source designation must always be provided. If you do not enter a target designation, files will be copied to the current directory.

This command provides a way to copy entire disks full of data, including all established directories and subdirectories. This command should be used instead of the **DISKCOPY** command when you want to create a disk with identical file structures, but with a different disk format (*for example, to copy all files from a 5 1/4 inch disk to a 3 1/2 inch disk*).

If the source is a directory, the directory will be copied onto the destination diskette. If the source to be copied includes more than one file, the destination files will be stored in a directory. You can add a backslash (\) to the end of the destination filename to make it a directory.

If **XCOPY** does not find a directory on the destination disk that matches a **PATH** specification in the command format, the copying will stop. A message will be displayed asking you to specify whether or not the destination file specification is to be stored as a filename or a directory name.

XCOPY is a much more powerful copying command than the **COPY** command. It is especially useful when backing up your fixed disk. A common usage would be to use the **/S** option along with the **/D:date** option to back up only the files that have been changed since the date of your last backup. If you are using **XCOPY** for this purpose, you will probably want to make a copy of the program (**XCOPY.EXE**) in the root directory of your fixed disk (*remember, when you use the /S option, XCOPY only copies files from subdirectories found WITHIN the current directory*).

After you enter the **XCOPY** command, the program may display:

```
Does (filename) specify a file name or directory name on the target  
(F = file, D = directory)
```

This means **XCOPY** cannot determine if you want the specified path designation entry to be sent to a filename on the target disk or to a directory.

NOTE:

Some versions of **DOS** provide a way to avoid this prompt. It is done by renaming the **XCOPY.EXE** command to **MCOPY.EXE**. When using **MCOPY**, **DOS** will automatically check to determine if the target is a filename

or a directory name and carry out the copy accordingly. To change the name of the command to **MCOPY**, enter:

```
copy xcopy.exe mcopy.exe
```

Then, you can use the new **MCOPY.EXE** program just as you would use **XCOPY.EXE**. The only difference is that **MCOPY** will automatically determine whether the target is to be a file or a directory.

If an error is encountered during the **XCOPY** process, the program returns one of the following exit codes:

- 0 - Copying was completed without error**
- 1 - No files found**
- 2 - User terminated the copy**
- 4 - Initialization error (not enough memory, invalid syntax, path not found)**
- 5 - Copy terminated due to INT 24 error reading or writing disk**

Options

/A - Copies only files that have been set as archive files (using the ATTRIB command). The copied files will still be marked as archive files in **BOTH** the source and destination files.

/D:(date) - Copies only those files in the source directory that have been changed on or **LATER** than the specified date.

/S - Copies all files in the current directory and in any subdirectory within it.

/E - Copies subdirectories, even if they are empty. If you use this option, you must use the **/S** option also.

/M - Copies the same marked archive files as specified in the **/A** option; however, the files on the destination disk are no longer marked as archive files. This switch checks the archive attribute of a file: if the file's archive attribute is set to off (**-A**), the file will not be copied.

/P - Does not copy the file until you respond to a prompt that asks you to confirm that you want the file copied. However, if you are using the **/E** option, you will not be prompted before an empty subdirectory is copied.

/V - Each file copied is verified to be sure the file stored on the destination disk is identical to the original on the source disk.

/W - Copies only after you respond to a prompt to begin copying (if this option is omitted, the copying begins as soon as you enter the XCOPY command and press the Enter key).

/Y - Causes XCOPY to replace existing files without a confirmation prompt.

/-Y - Causes XCOPY to give you a confirmation prompt before replacing an existing file.

Example

To copy all files and directories (except empty directories) from **drive C to drive A**, enter:

```
xcopy c: a: /s
```