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**Article:** How to use CACLS

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# **Microsoft Windows – How to use CACLS**

**Cacls** command can be used to display or modify **access control list** (*ACLs*) of files. Below you can find few examples of **cacls** command for various scenarios.

**Find the access permissions of a file**

We can run the below command to print the access permissions of a file.

cacls filename

Example:

c:\>cacls data.txt

c:\data.txt NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM:F

BUILTIN\Administrators:F

WINCMD-PC\John:F

c:\>

**Change access permissions of a file**

There are two ways you can modify the access permissions of a file.

The first method is to replace the existing access permissions where as the second one is to edit the existing permissions. Replace existing access permissions: we can use **/P** switch to replace the existing permissions.

The *syntax* of this *command* is as below:

cacls filename /P user1:permissions user2:permissions user3:permissions [user4:permissions ........]

The existing permissions will be replaced with the ones specified in the above *command*. To illustrate the use of this **/P** switch, let’s modify the access permissions of the file **data.txt** shown in the above example.

c:\>cacls data.txt

c:\data.txt WINCMD-PC\John:F

NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM:F

BUILTIN\Administrators:F

c:\>cacls data.txt /P BUILTIN\Administrators:R

Are you sure (Y/N)?y

processed file: c:\data.txt

c:\>cacls data.txt

c:\data.txt BUILTIN\Administrators:R

As you can see, we have not specified anything about the user **John** with the **/P** switch. Since the **/P** flag replaces the permissions, after executing the command, **data.txt** will not have any access permissions for the user **John**.

**Edit access permissions for a user**

The second method allows to modify access permissions for a user without impacting other users permissions. We can use **/E** switch for this.

For example, in the above case, let’s give user **John** only *read permission* and keep the same permissions for other users. The command for this is:

c:\>cacls files.txt

c:\files.txt NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM:F

BUILTIN\Administrators:F

WINCMD-PC\John:F

c:\>cacls files.txt /E /P WINCMD-PC\John:R

processed file: c:\files.txt

c:\>cacls files.txt

c:\files.txt NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM:F

BUILTIN\Administrators:F

WINCMD-PC\John:R