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
```

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```
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
```

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