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**Procedure:** SQL Server - Importing and Exporting Data from CLI with BCP

**Source:** [**LINK**](http://databases.about.com/od/sqlserver/a/bcp.htm) **(**<http://databases.about.com/od/sqlserver/a/bcp.htm>**)**

**Permalink:** [**LINK**](http://heelpbook.altervista.org/2012/sql-server-importing-and-exporting-data-from-cli-with-bcp/)

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# [**SQL Server – Importing and Exporting Data from CLI with BCP**](http://heelpbook.altervista.org/2012/sql-server-importing-and-exporting-data-from-cli-with-bcp/)

The bulk copy (bcp) command of **Microsoft SQL Server** provides you with the ability to insert large numbers of records directly from the command line. In addition to being a great tool for command-line aficionados, **bcp** is a powerful tool for those seeking to insert data into a **SQL Server** database from within a batch file or other programmatic method.

**bcp Syntax**

The basic syntax for using **bcp** is:

bcp <table\_name> <direction> <file\_name> <options>

Where the arguments take the following values:

* **table\_name** is the fully qualified name of the table. For example, you might use **inventory.dbo.fruits** to insert records into the fruits table, owned by the database owner, in the inventory database.
* **direction** indicates whether you want to import (“in” direction) or export (“out” direction) data.
* **file\_name** is the full path to the file. For example, you could import the file **C:\fruit\inventory.txt**.
* **options** allow you to specify parameters for the bulk operation. For example, you can specify the maximum number of errors allowed with the **–m** option. You may also use the **–x** option to specify an XML file format. Consult [Microsoft’s bcp documentation](http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ms162802.aspx) for a full list.

**bcp Import Example**

Let’s put it all together. Imagine that you have a fruits table in your inventory database and that you want to programmatically import all of the records from a text file stored on your hard drive into that database. You would use the following bcp command syntax:

bcp inventory.dbo.fruits in "C:\fruit\inventory.txt" -c -T

This would produce the following output:

C:\>bcp inventory.dbo.fruits in "C:\fruit\inventory.txt" -c -T

 Starting copy...

 36 rows copied.

 Network packet size (bytes): 4096

 Clock Time (ms.) Total : 16 Average : (2250.00 rows per sec.)

 C:\>

If you’re sharp-eyed, you might have noticed that I slipped in two new options on that command line. The **–c** option specifies that the file format of the import file will be **tab-delimited** text with each record on a new line. The **–T** option specifies that bcp should use **Windows authentication** to connect to the database.

**bcp Export Example**

As I mentioned earlier, you can export data from your database with bcp by changing the direction of the operation from “in” to “out”. For example, we could dump the contents of the fruit table to a text file with the following command:

bcp inventory.dbo.fruits out "C:\fruit\inventory.txt" -c -T

Here’s how that looks on the command line:

C:\>bcp inventory.dbo.fruits out "C:\fruit\inventory.txt" -c -T

 Starting copy...

 42 rows copied.

 Network packet size (bytes): 4096

 Clock Time (ms.) Total : 1 Average : (42000.00 rows per sec.)

 C:\>

That’s all there is to the **bcp** command.

You may use this command from within batch files or other programs with access to the **DOS** command line to automate the import and export of data from your **SQL Server** database.