

LESSON 29

USE DOS TO HIDE FILES

There may come a time when you'll want to restrict access to files or folders and, believe it or not, DOS offers a simple but elegant solution. We've been told from day one that on a PC you can only name files with up to 8 characters and an optional period plus 3 more characters. We were also told that unlike the Mac operating system, we couldn't use a blank space in a file name. Wrong!

Click on start, then programs, then click on the MS/DOS prompt and you'll exit to a DOS window. If it doesn't fill the entire screen, click on the middle box at the upper-right corner of your DOS window.

For our example today, we will change the name of a Microsoft Word document. I'll use the name JEFFLET.DO as an example. You can use this technique on any document or folder. From the DOS prompt I'll need to get to the "my documents" subdirectory. Do this by typing CD\MYDOCU~1 and pressing Enter. The tilde character is located at the far left of the top row of keys on your keyboard. You will now be in your MY DOCUMENTS directory. Select the file you wish to make secure, and rename it using this syntax or language. REN JEFF LTR. JEFFLTR.DOC DOC.

How did I get the space into the file name? It's easy. To insert the blank character or space, hold down the ALT key and on the keypad on the right side of the keyboard, and press 2, then 5, then 5 once more. Again, hold down the ALT key and press 255. This inserts a special character for the blank space, and now the file will be RENAMED JEFF LTR.DOC. Now you can type EXIT and press the Enter key to return to Windows.

Now your file will show that blank space as an underline and, when you try to access that file, Windows will give you the message "cannot open this file or the folder name does not exist. Remember that you can do this to both files and folders and now you have your own way of making files and folders secure against prying eyes.

Now that wasn't so hard, was it?

