

Pathnames

The nShell(tm) uses traditional Macintosh pathnames to identify files and directories. In the Macintosh file system the path to a file may be specified as one long name. Because Macintosh names often have spaces in them, nShell allows the quoting of pathnames. The command:

```
cat "my file"
```

would type a file called "my file" from your current directory onto the screen. When you want to select a file on another disk, the name of the disk is added to the pathname. The command:

```
cat "my disk:my file"
```

would type a file called "my file" from "my disk". The ":" character is used to tell the Macintosh that you are specifying a path to a file, and not a file in the current directory.

If you wanted to identify a file in a specific directory on "my disk", you would add the name of that directory to the pathname. The command:

```
cat "my disk:my folder:my file"
```

would type a file called "my file" from the directory "my folder" on "my disk". This is called a full pathname because it specifies every name from the disk name to the file name.

You can also specify pathnames relative to your current directory. If you start a pathname with a ".", the Macintosh knows that this path starts from your current directory. The command:

```
cat ".:another folder:my file"
```

would type a file from "another folder" in your current directory. Because some of this path is implied, it is called a partial pathname.

Another form of shorthand may be used with full or partial pathnames. Using two ":"s in a pathname means "up one directory". If your current directory is "my disk:my folder", the command:

```
cat ":::my file"
```

would move up from your current directory and type "my file" from "my disk".

Testing Paths

The nShell includes a command called pathchk, which allows you to experiment with pathnames. When given a pathname, pathchk attempts to print the equivalent full pathname. For example, if your current directory is "Hard Disk:nShell" and you type the command:

```
pathchk :bin
```

the response would be:

```
Hard Disk:nShell:bin
```

The pathchk command does not change any files, and can safely be used to test pathnames before they are used.