

ASTR 121 – Spring 2016

MATLAB File Operations

Though you can easily move through, create and manipulate files on your desktop, there are additional ways to do this through MATLAB. Following are the basics of these operations. Note that many of these commands have more functionality than given here.

Looking Around

'pwd' – This command shows the current working directory. In other words, this displays the folder on your computer that MATLAB is currently looking in. Unless a path is added, MATLAB can only access files in the current working directory.

'ls' or 'dir' – Both of these commands list the files in a directory. If only the command is given, it lists the files in the current working directory. You can also specify it to list the files of a different folder by specifying folder, e.g., `'ls \astr121\studentname\labx'`.

'cd' – This command changes the current working directory, and is how you move between folders. Typing `cd` and then the directory name moves you into that directory. Additionally, you can use `'cd .'` to move up one directory. (`'.'` in general means up one directory, so you can use it in other commands, like `'ls .'`)

Working with Files

'movefile' – To move a file from one folder to another, typing `'movefile [source] [destination]'` moves whatever file you've specified as the 'source' to the directory indicated by 'destination'. This command can also be used to rename a file by replacing 'destination' with the new name.

'copyfile' – This command creates a duplicate file or directory by specifying the original object to be copied and the new name, e.g., `'copyfile [original] [copyname]'`.

'delete' – Files following this command are completely deleted from your disk. They are not retrievable after deletion (however, the 'recycle' command sends objects to the recycle bin).

Working with Folders (Or Directories)

'mkdir' – Makes a new folder. To make a folder in the current working directory, just specify the new folder name.

'rmdir' – Deletes a directory. Note that for a directory to be deleted, it must be empty.

'addpath' – To make MATLAB able to work with files in more than just your current working directory, you can explicitly tell it to look somewhere else in addition by using the 'addpath' command with the name of the directory you want to read.