What is a Wild card? Their 2 Types, Uses With Examples

What is a Wild Card:: The wildcards are nothing but a symbolic representation of one or more characters, which is usually used within the MS-DOS commands.

They are usually used in dir, copy, del, xcopy, etc.

`There are basically two types of wildcards.`

- **Asterisk (*)**
- **Question Mark (?)**

Asterisk is used for one or more characters in a file name and extension whereas a question mark is used only for a single character in a filename or extension.

What is a Wild Card in DOS

A wild card is a special or unique character that is used instead of any number, letter, or character. It denotes all possible numbers or characters.

The wild card character is used as a placeholder for any number of characters. It can be used anywhere in the string, including at the end.

One common use for wild cards is to replace unknown values with default values.

Another common use is when you want to match all possible character combinations within a field or stream of data.

A wild card is a symbol that represents any number of values. It can be used on both the command line and in scripts or batch files.

Wildcards are used in DOS, **Unix**, and MS-DOS commands and scripts. They are also used in batch shell commands and scripts.

The wild card is a special symbol used in the DOS operating system.

It is similar to the asterisk (*) but it can be used as a wildcard character in place of any other character or group of characters.

8+ Rules for Using Wildcards

1. Question mark? is used to represent a single character.
2. Asterisk is used for one or more characters.
3. Question mark? wildcard can be used anywhere in the filename and extension to obtain the desired result.
4. Same as a question mark? wildcard asterisk * can also be used anywhere in the filename and extension to obtain the desired result.
5. They can be used at the beginning of the filename or extension or in the middle or even at the end of the filename or extension.
6. Wildcards ? and * cannot be used with quotes.
7. Both wildcards can be used in a command.
8. To find and fetch specific results wild card should be used intelligently.

Uses of Wildcards

Below are some examples for your understanding and learning how to use wildcards for specific purposes.

Let's say you want to copy all files from d:\movies to e: here we will use wildcard Asterisk (*) follow the below-given command.

Open your Command prompt.

To know more about the dos and dos command click here. and type the following command in the command line.

```
C:\> copy d:\movies\*.* e: (Press Enter)
```

To search for all files starting from the letter A .use the following given command

```
C:\> dir/a*.* (Press Enter)
```

In the above-given command, it will search for every file starting with character A at the beginning of a file and display the result on the screen.

here * after A denotes every character to search after A and * in extension denotes every character present in the extension.

Now let's say you want to delete every file present in a specific directory in the **computer system.**

For Example, d:\movies is the directory and you need to delete every file present in that directory.

```
Use the below-mentioned command.
```

- C:\>del d:\movies*.* (Press Enter)
- Dir *A.* here the result will show all the files whose second character is A.
- Dir mo?se here the result will match the record containing five characters like mouse, morse, etc.
- For searching a file which starts with initial b. **c:\>Dir/s b*.*** This command will fetch a record starting from b with any extension name.
- To delete a filename that starts from the letter C.
- **C:\> del c*.* (Press Enter)**

Wildcard Characters in Dos with Examples

Wild cards are extensively used and utilized in performing operations on files and directory in relatively easier ways.

The wild cards are widely used in **DOS** as they significantly increased the overall efficiency and flexibility of files and directory structure.

The use of wild card can save users precious time as the operation performed using wildcards can be executed faster compared to normal operations.

```
There are various examples of wildcards characters in dos that are mentioned here.
```

1. Asterisk (*).
2. Question Mark (?).
3. Brackets ([]).
4. Tilde ().

1. Asterisk (*).

The asterisk wildcards represent or denote any number or characters. Let us understand with example, let say you need to copy all files with .exe extension from one drive to another.

```
C:\ copy *.exe to d:\
```

This is the power of wildcard specially asterisk (*).

2. Question Mark (?).

The question mark is represented or denote a single character.

Let us understand with example. In wildcard specification "?" is used as replacement for one character.

Let say you want to search a file from the computer but you are unsure about a character in the file name.

```
C:\ dir/s movie?.mp4
```

3. Brackets ([]).

Brackets are used to specify a range of characters for matching. For specific searches use this syntax.

```
C:\ dir[a-z]*.txt
```

The wildcards in dos can be used in combination for better performance and functionality for example.

```
C:\dir/s a*.t?t
```

Explain the Wildcard Characters in Copying Files

Wildcards are considered to be one of the powerful ways to select multiple files according to the requirement of user.

The wildcards such as **asterisk and question mark** are extensively used and utilized for bulk operations and efficient results.

These wildcards eventually save time and effort also enhances the overall the productivity.

The wildcards are used in various operating system that includes DOS. The combination of wildcards is used for faster and efficient performance.

Frequently Asked Questions [FAQs] on Wildcards

What are wildcard characters in Windows 10?

Question mark (?) and asterisk (*).

How many wildcard characters are there?

Asterisk, Question Mark and tilde.

Can wildcards be used in hosts' file?

No, you cannot use wildcards in hosts file.

What is %% in DOS?

%% to perform command within a batch file.

Is a wildcard in Windows Operating System

The asterisk (*) and question mark (?) are used in windows operating system.

For More Information Please Do Visit . https://www.chtips.com/msdos/what-are-wildcards/