



▲ *ProDOS Pathname Primer* ▲

Pinpoint™

*The following is from an Appendix that Pinpoint Publishing provide in each of their product manuals. This one is excerpted from the KeyPlayer Manual.*

# ProDOS Pathname Primer

## Overview

This refresher on ProDOS Pathnames is divided into four general sections:

1. What's a ProDOS Pathname?
2. What's in a ProDOS Pathname?
3. ProDOS Pathname Spelling
4. ProDOS Pathname Syntax

*What's a ProDOS Pathname* will very briefly tell you why you have to bother with ProDOS Pathnames. *What's in a ProDOS Pathname* will tell you what components come together to make a ProDOS Pathname. *ProDOS Pathname Spelling* will show you the rules for creating the individual components of a ProDOS Pathname, and *ProDOS Pathname Syntax* will teach you how to link the individual components of a ProDOS Pathname into a complete ProDOS Pathname.

## What's a ProDOS Pathname?

It may be better to start with the question: What's ProDOS? ProDOS is a collection of programs that, among other things, controls Apple disk drive functions such as loading, saving, copying, and erasing your work files. A ProDOS Pathname is ProDOS's map to the specific work file you want ProDOS to load, save, copy, or erase. Just as you tell a plumber in which house to work, in which room of the house to work, and finally on which fixture in the room to work; you have to tell ProDOS in which storage device to work, in which section of the storage device to work, and on which file in the specified location to work.

## What's in a ProDOS Pathname?

When you access your work you must:

1. Tell your computer where you want it to access your work
2. Tell your computer the name of the work you want it to access

You might say, then, that there are two general types of names you must know how to give your computer when you access your computer work. There are:

1. PLACE names that tell your computer where your work is
2. There are THING names that tell your computer what the work is

## Place Names

There are two kinds of PLACE names. There are:

1. VOLUME names
2. DIRECTORY names

A VOLUME name is the most general kind of name. It identifies the floppy, hard, high capacity, or RAM disk on which your work resides. Another word for a VOLUME name is the ROOT DIRECTORY name. Supplying ProDOS a VOLUME name is analogous to telling the plumber in the example above in which house to work.

A DIRECTORY name is a more specific name than a VOLUME name. A DIRECTORY name identifies the section of the floppy, hard, high capacity, or RAM disk in which your work resides. Supplying ProDOS a DIRECTORY name is analogous to telling the plumber in the example above in which room of the house to work. If you have not divided your storage device into sections, then the ProDOS pathname for any file on that storage device will not include a directory name. There can, however, be up to 51 subdirectories or files in the ROOT DIRECTORY, and therefore, 51 DIRECTORY names through which you can route your computer to a work file.

## Thing Names

There is only one kind of THING name. It is called a FILE name.

A FILE name identifies your computer work. It is the most specific of the kinds of names that make up a ProDOS pathname. A FILE name represents the light at the end of the tunnel, the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. At the end of its journey down the path you specify by supplying PLACE names, ProDOS should find a FILE name and the computer work associated with it. Supplying ProDOS with a FILE name is analogous to telling the plumber in the example above on which fixture to work.

## ProDOS Pathname Spelling

Now that you know that ProDOS Pathnames are made up of PLACE names and THING names, you should learn the rules for creating PLACE and THING names. There's not that much to it; the rules for creating PLACE and THING names are the same. After you learn these simple rules, the last section will teach you how to link these different names you create together to create an entire ProDOS Pathname. For now, let's learn the rules naming your work and the places where you store your work:

1. The name can be up to fifteen characters long. There can be no blank spaces. It is common practice to substitute blank spaces with periods

**LE.PETIT.PRINCE**

2. The name must begin with a letter from the alphabet

**ON.CLOUD.9**

3. Characters two through fifteen of the filename may contain any combination of letters, numbers, and periods.

#### **TWO.4.6.8.**

### **ProDOS Pathname Syntax**

If you knew where a treasure was hidden, and you had to tell someone how to get to it, you wouldn't tell them:

1. Dig
2. Take ten steps north from the big tree in the center of the Village
3. Go to Spain
4. Find an iron box about six feet under
5. Go to the village of Corona Del Mar

You would start with the most general instructions and finish with the most specific, like this:

1. Go to Spain
2. Go to the village of Corona Del Mar
3. Take ten steps north from the big tree in the center of the village
4. Dig
5. Find an iron box about six feet under

Well, that's how you order your ProDOS Pathname components: start with the most general, and end with the most specific. You:

1. Start with PLACE names, listing the VOLUME name first, which is the most general PLACE name
2. Then list DIRECTORY name(s), the more specific of the PLACE names
3. Finish with the THING name, known as the FILE name, which is the most specific of all the names

### **Connecting the Parts**

How do you actually connect these names together so ProDOS will recognize the names as a complete ProDOS Pathname?

If you were to write out the treasure example into a complete English sentence, you would connect the components with commas, like this:

Go to Spain, go to the village of Corona Del Mar, take ten steps north from the big tree in the center of the village, dig, and find an iron box about six feet under

But in ProDOS language, you connect the components with slashes, like this:

**/VOLUME.NAME/DIRECTORY.NAME/FILE.NAME**

Notice that you start the whole deal with a slash as well as connect the separate components with slashes. You do this so ProDOS will recognize what follows the initial slash as instructions to your work file. Adapting our treasure hunt example for ProDOS, we might get the following result:

**/SPAIN/CORONA.DEL.MAR/TEN.STEPS.NORTH/BLACK.IRON.BOX**

In the example above, /SPAIN/ is the VOLUME name, /CORONA.DEL.MAR/ and /TEN.STEPS.NORTH/ are DIRECTORY names, and /BLACK.IRON.BOX is the FILE name.

**When your computer asks for the PREFIX or PATH, not the PATHNAME**

Sometimes your computer or a computer program will only ask you for the PATH to your work file, and not for the complete PATHNAME. When a computer or computer program asks you for the PATH, it is saying "I know what you want, I just don't know where to look for it." All you do to supply your computer with the PATH to a certain work file is subtract the FILE name like this:

**/VOLUME.NAME/DIRECTORY.NAME/**

So our treasure hunt example would look like this:

**/SPAIN/CORONA.DEL.MAR/TEN.STEPS.NORTH/**

A ProDOS PATH is the same as a ProDOS PREFIX

**When your Computer only asks for the FILE name**

When your computer or computer program asks for the FILE name, it is saying, "I know where to look, but I need to know what to look for." All you do to supply the FILE name is subtract the PATH or PREFIX, which is the same thing as subtracting the VOLUME name and the DIRECTORY name(s). This is what it looks like:

**/FILE.NAME**

And this is how the treasure hunt example looks:

**/BLACK.IRON.BOX**

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