



**Edinburgh
Regional
Computing
Centre**

User Note 56

(September 1984)

Title:

VFILES on EMAS 2900

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Synopsis

The command VFILES is a screen-oriented version, with enhancements, of the Standard Subsystem command FILES.

Keywords

file management, VFILES

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Introduction

The command VFILES is a screen-oriented version, with enhancements, of the Standard Subsystem command FILES. Its purposes are

- * to aid the search for a file or pdf file member which you require;
- * to ease the task of tidying (selectively destroying, discarding, archiving, restoring) your files (on-line or archive).

Availability

The program uses facilities implemented in the Terminal Control Processors (TCPs) for full-screen operation of the main types of VDU. The program cannot work with terminals connected via the new JNT PADs at the present time; however, it is possible that future versions of the PAD software will incorporate handling of the JNT-sponsored Simple Screen Management Protocol (SSMP), and when this is done, VFILES will be suitably enhanced. It is also possible that locally written software for the BBC Micro will support SSMP even with existing PAD software, thus enabling VFILES and other screen-oriented programs to be made available in advance of upgraded PAD software.

The VFILES command is an application of the Virtual Video Package, described in User Note 30, available from the Advisory service. It is currently suitable for use with the following terminal types:

Perkin-Elmer 550	("Bantam")
Newbury 7001	
Lear-Siegler ADM-3A	
Visual 200	
Hazeltine Esprit	(Including Esprit II and Esprit III)
IBM 3101	
ICL KDS7362	
VT52	(Including BBC Micro with VT52 emulation)

The appropriate terminal-type must first have been indicated to the Subsystem to establish the relevant information for the session by means of the TERMINALTYPE command, (or perhaps preferably by use of the TTYINIT command in conjunction with OPTION(FSTARTFILE=file)). Further details can be obtained by typing:

Command: HELP(TERMINALTYPE)
Command: HELP(TTYINIT)
Command: HELP(FSTARTFILE)

The command is accessed by typing:

Command: OPTION(SEARCHDIR=CONLIB.GENERAL)
(once only)

Command: VFILES(mask, group)

If VFILES is inadvertently called with the incorrect terminal-type set, the screen image will be garbled. To exit to Command level, type END (RETURN) or ABORT (RETURN), and set the correct terminal-type.

Facilities

The (optional) parameters for VFILES are (mask, group), and are analogous to the parameters for the standard command FILES.

The command causes a display of on-line filenames or archive filenames or both. The TAB, LINEFEED, RETURN or arrow keys are used to position the cursor on a filename or on a special 'filename' [ALL_THESE]. A typical display looks like this:

To get the following actions, overtype the FILENAME with corresponding symbol(s):
Cherish: * Hazard: <space> Destroy: - More info: +
Archive: ** Restore: ! Discard: -

The following keywords may be typed anywhere: NEXT, PREV, TOP, MASK=, GROUP=, HELP, STOP, END, ABORT, QUIT. ACTION takes place only on STOP/END; NO action on ABORT/QUIT. Type RETURN to terminate (send) an input message.

----This explanation will be abbreviated in future if you type keyword BRIEF----

* CACA	* CAST	* DUFFOPT	* ECCE	* ERCC
* FILEINDEX	* FTPHOSTS	* HELEN	* HOSTS	* INDEX
* LEXICON	* LONSANLATS	* M#INBOX	* M#PROFILE	* MAPS
* MICPRINT44	* NEILY	* NEWSLI	* NICK	* PARASS
* SCRIB	* SCRIB#AUX	* SS#DIR	* SS#JOURNAL	* SS#OPT
* SS#PROFILE	* START	* VFILESLI		

[ALL_THESE]

Notes on Use

Use the arrow keys (if available) to move the cursor to the filename whose status is to be altered. Type the command code required on top of the filename followed by RETURN. Acceptance of the command code is indicated in a message line near the top of the screen.

The TAB, RETURN and LINEFEED keys may also be used to move the cursor to the desired position. The TAB and RETURN keys cause the cursor to move to the next filename or the next line respectively. LINEFEED causes the cursor to move downwards one line. TAB and RETURN cause interaction with the host program and will hence give slightly slower response than is the case for arrow key movements. If the cursor is on the bottom screen line when RETURN is pressed, the next page of filenames is displayed (if there are more to be displayed). When the cursor has been suitably positioned you can CHERISH, HAZARD, ARCHIVE, DESTROY or ANALYSE on-line files by typing a single character followed by RETURN. If a file is a partitioned file and ANALYSE is selected, the member names are displayed. The members may be destroyed or further analysed using the same mechanisms. The ANALYSE command causes display of the filetype and size, for on-line files or pdf file members. Similarly archived files may be RESTORED or DISCARDED. If the cursor is placed on the special filename [ALL_THESE], then the CHERISH, HAZARD, DESTROY or DISCARD operations may be performed on all the displayed filenames.

When an action on a file is requested, the display is updated to show the intended status of the file. For example, files which will be destroyed when the END command is given will be marked with "-", files which will be cherished are marked with "*".

Error messages, actions to be taken and brief file-analysis data for ANALYSE are displayed near the right-hand end of the line above the line of dashes separating the instructions from the filenames.

No action is taken (that is, no files are DESTROYED, CHERISHED etc.) until an END or STOP command is given. If an ABORT or QUIT command is given, control is returned to Command level with no side effects.

Parameters

"Mask" is used to select subsets of all filenames in the group specified by "group". "Mask" comprises alphanumeric characters with possibly one embedded "*" or two if they are at the left and right. The "*" is used to represent one or more unspecified characters in selecting the filenames to be displayed. If "mask" is omitted or is the single character "*" then all filenames selected by "group" are displayed.

"Group" is a combination of one or more characters from the following list:

- I files in the immediate filestore (i.e. on-line files)
- C cherished files in the immediate filestore
- E include temporary and system on-line files
- H hazarded files in the immediate filestore
- A files in the archive filestore
- * all the above.

Other characters are ignored. The default value for "group" is "I". For full details of "mask" and "group" type HELP(FILE) at Command level.

The current "mask" and "group" can be altered from within the VFILES command by typing "MASK=new mask" and "GROUP=new group".

If there are more filenames resulting from the "mask, group" specification than can be displayed on the screen, the next or previous screenfuls can be displayed by the use of the NEXT or PREV commands. PREV is also used to return from a display of pfile membernames to the previous display of filenames or membernames. The TOP command causes return to the first display of the current "mask, group" specification.

Detailed Description

On entry to VFILES the top lines of the screen contain a summary of the commands and command codes.

Each input message (command or command code) is terminated (sent to the host) by typing RETURN. Commands may be typed anywhere in the filename display area; command codes are typed on top of the filename to which the required action is to be applied. In each case the screen image is repaired when the host receives the data and the action to be taken is reported on a line near the top of the screen. Additionally, filenames may be marked to show their future status (after the END command is sent).

The head-of-screen summary has a brief form and a longer form. The brief form is selected by typing command BRIEF; subsequent calls of VFILES present the brief form thereafter.

The longer form is re-adopted if the HELP command is given. HELP causes a detailed description of the commands and command codes to be displayed.

The command codes, to be typed on top of a filename, are selected from the following table:

Action Required	Action Code
CHERISH	*
HAZARD	<space character>
ARCHIVE	**
RESTORE	(split vertical bar)
DESTROY	- (minus)
DISCARD	- (minus)
ANALYSE	+

For example, if the brief form of summary has been selected and a minus sign has been typed on the first character of filename NEILY the display could appear like this:

```
Cherish: * Hazard: <sp> Destroy: - Anal: + NEXT,PREV,MASK=,GROUP=,HELP,ABORT,
Archive: ** Restore: / Discard: - END Destroy(NEILY)
```

```
-----
* CACA      * CAST      * DUFFOPT    * ECCE      * ERCC
* FILEINDEX * FTPHOSTS   * HELEN      * HOSTS     * INDEX
* LEXICON   * LONSANLATS * M#INBOX    * M#PROFILE * MAPS
* MICPRINT44 - NEILY   * NEWSLI     * NICK      * PARASS
* SCRIB     * SCRIB#AUX  * SS#DIR     * SS#JOURNAL * SS#OPT
* SS#PROFILE * START     * VFILESLI
[ALL THESE]
```

The following keywords (commands) may be typed at any position on the screen (though not so that they attempt to go beyond column 80 of the terminal), in order to manipulate the screen (e.g. to move to next or previous screenful of filenames) or to exit from the program to command level.

NEXT	to display the next page of file or member names.
PREV	to display the previous page of file or member names.
TOP	to display the initial page of filenames in the current "mask, group".
MASK=newmask	to change the current mask.
GROUP=newgroup	to change the current group.
HELP or ?	to get further assistance.
END or STOP	to terminate the command with the specified file operations taking place.
QUIT or ABORT	to terminate the command with no file operations being performed.

Any inputs other than the above codes and keywords are ignored and the screen image is repaired.

NOTE that the actions selected by typing the command codes on top of filenames do not take place until the END or STOP keywords are input. To exit from the program without any of the selected actions, type ABORT

or QUIT. RETURN must be typed immediately after each command code (multiple command codes cannot be indicated within one message to the host).

Typing ahead of responses from the host is not desirable during full-screen working, with present communications arrangements, because the host program is not then able to track the screen cursor correctly. Further, the 'trigger characters' (those which cause forwarding of input to the host) are not echoed by the TCP. Therefore it is preferable to wait a second or two after typing RETURN (the usual terminator), if the host does not respond immediately. Input messages terminated by control characters other than RETURN are ignored, with a "???" message on the message line near the top of the screen. If a mistake is made, say in typing an action code, it can be made invalid by typing some more characters, to form an invalid command word, and then pressing RETURN. Alternatively, a terminator other than RETURN should be used, for example CAN (cancel) or Control+X.

Since none of the file actions is actually performed until the END or STOP command is given, it is possible to alter intended actions previously recorded. For example, if a file has been marked DESTROY (and a "-" character is displayed against it), you can later go back to the filename and instead mark it CHERISH or HAZARD, and the DESTROY will not then take place when the END command is given. In general, command codes (if accepted) other than those for DESTROY and DISCARD will cause an 'UNDESTROY' operation (i.e. remove DESTROY attribute if one has been given). This feature can be used in conjunction with the special filename [ALL_THESE] to mark (say) all displayed filenames except one or two. For example, to destroy all files on the screen except one, place the cursor on [ALL_THESE] and type "-" RETURN. All files are marked "-". Then move to the single file which is not to be destroyed and type " " RETURN (HAZARD) or "*" RETURN (CHERISH).

The special filename [ALL_THESE] is displayed only if the screen is not full and does not contain a mixture of on-line and archive filenames.

If an ANALYSE has been performed on a pdfilename, and its members have thereby been displayed, return to the previous level by typing the command PREV (repeatedly if necessary) or the command TOP.

Further developments

Possible further extensions of the VFILES program (apart from its use via PAD terminals if and when SSMP becomes a standard) include

- * optional displaying of the first few lines of a character file, possibly via a LIST command;
- * extension of the arrangements for pdfiles to the intended hierarchic filestore of EMAS-3.