UNIX Tutorial Four

4.1 Wildcards

The * wildcard

The character ***** is called a wildcard, and will match against none or more character(s) in a file (or directory) name. For example, in your **unixstuff** directory, type

```
% ls list*
```

This will list all files in the current directory starting with **list....**

Try typing

```
% ls *list
```

This will list all files in the current directory ending with **....list**

The ? wildcard

The character **?** will match exactly one character.
So **?ouse** will match files like **house** and **mouse**, but not **grouse**.
Try typing

```
% ls ?list
```

4.2 Filename conventions

We should note here that a directory is merely a special type of file. So the rules and conventions for naming files apply also to directories.

In naming files, characters with special meanings such as **/ * & %** , should be avoided. Also, avoid using spaces within names. The safest way to name a file is to use only alphanumeric characters, that is, letters and numbers, together with _ (underscore) and . (dot).

Good filenames	Bad filenames
project.txt	project
my_big_program.c	my big program.c
fred_dave.doc	fred & dave.doc

File names conventionally start with a lower-case letter, and may end with a dot followed by a group of letters indicating the contents of the file. For example, all files consisting of C code may be named with the ending **.c**, for example, **prog1.c** . Then in order to list all files containing C code in your home directory, you need only type `ls *.c` in that directory.

4.3 Getting Help

On-line Manuals

There are on-line manuals which gives information about most commands. The manual pages tell you which options a particular command can take, and how each option modifies the behaviour of the command. Type `man command` to read the manual page for a particular command.

For example, to find out more about the `wc` (word count) command, type

```
% man wc
```

Alternatively

```
% whatis wc
```

gives a one-line description of the command, but omits any information about options etc.

Apropos

When you are not sure of the exact name of a command,

```
% apropos keyword
```

will give you the commands with keyword in their manual page header. For example, try typing

```
% apropos copy
```

Summary

Command	Meaning
`*`	match any number of characters
`?`	match one character
`man command`	read the online manual page for a command
`whatis command`	brief description of a command
`apropos keyword`	match commands with keyword in their man pages