

Quotation marks around spaces aren't necessary in the PATH environment variable

 devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20060929-06

September 29, 2006



Raymond Chen

The purpose of quotation marks is to allow a character that would normally be interpreted as a delimiter to be included as part of a file name. Most of the time, this delimiter is the space. The `CreateProcess` function uses a space to separate the program name from its arguments. Most programs separate their command line arguments with a space. But the `PATH` environment variable doesn't use spaces to separate directories. It uses semicolons. This means that if you want to add a directory with spaces in its name to the path, you don't need quotation marks since spaces mean nothing to the `PATH` environment variable. The quotation marks don't hurt, mind you, but they don't help either.

On the other hand, if the directory you want to add contains a semicolon in its name, then you do need the quotation marks, because it's the semicolon that you need to protect.

[Raymond Chen](#)

Follow

