

# Registered command lines are just command lines, not a programming language

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Raymond Chen

A customer wanted to register a file extension with a complex command line that goes beyond simple string insertion.

When the user double-clicks a \*.xyz file, we want it to run the Contoso program not only with the file name as a command line, but also with an additional command line argument that is a transformation of the file name.

For example, if the user double-clicks C:\Users\Chris\Awesome.xyz, we want to run the command line

```
"C:\Program Files\Contoso\contoso.exe" -exceptions C:\Users\Chris\Awesome.exceptions  
C:\Users\Chris\Awesome.xyz
```

if a file Awesome.exceptions exists in the same directory as Awesome.xyz. Otherwise, just launch it without the bonus -exceptions option.

We tried using %~dpn1.exceptions, but that just produces the percent sign and stuff. And it still doesn't deal with testing whether the exceptions file exists.

The command line is just a command line with insertions. It is not a programming language. If you want a programming language, you'll have to write a program.

For example, you could write a batch file that looks for a .exceptions file in the same directory as the file whose name was passed on the command line, and then run the contoso.exe program appropriately based on what you discover.

```
@echo off  
if exist "%~dpn1.exceptions" (  
    echo "C:\Program Files\Contoso\contoso.exe" -exceptions "%~dpn1.exceptions" "%1"  
) else (  
    echo "C:\Program Files\Contoso\contoso.exe" "%1"  
)
```

You can then use this batch file as the command line.

```
"C:\Program Files\Contoso\Contoso-launcher.cmd" "%1"
```

Of course, this will display a command prompt briefly. You can write a program in a non-console language if that bothers you. At this point, the problem has been reduced to computer programming.