

Why aren't shortcuts as easy as unix links?

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Commenter dingo asks, “Why are shortcuts so hard to manipulate? Why can’t they be as easy as unix links?” Well, if you want something like unix links, then you can just create a hard link. Creating them is about the same difficulty (`CreateHardLink` vs `link`) and manipulating them is the same since you don’t actually manipulate a hard link. You just use it like a regular file (since a regular file *is* a hard link). If you want something like unix symbolic links, then you can create an NTFS junction, such as this one that mounts a drive into a directory. (I’m told that Windows Vista expands the repertoire of symbolic links as well.)

But neither of these features is available on FAT (or CD-ROMs or Novell Netware or email), which meant that Windows 95 couldn’t use them. Last year I discussed in some detail why shortcuts are files. Maybe that’s what your question is really about.

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