AIX and AIX Desktop basics

General info:

AIX is the implementation of unix used on RS/6000 machines. There are some differences but none that we need to worry about at this stage. One feature of AIX is the *smit* program. This is a menu-driven program that will guide you through most of the standard unix operations. It can be used to schedule jobs, print files, check on resources and many other functions. It does not require XWindows, but is nicer to use in such a case. *Smit* even makes system administration (e.g. creating a print queue) possible for non-experts.

The AIX Desktop is a program that runs on top of XWindows. It provides a graphical means of managing directories manipulating files, running programs Sun machines have a different window manager and file manager, but work in a similar way.

Starting AIX Desktop:

Some machines will automatically start the Desktop if you log on from a graphics terminal. Otherwise, you must first start Motif/XWindows and then use the *Root menu* to start the Desktop. Select the *clients* box, and then the *xdt* option. The name of the programme running the Desktop is *xdt*. Since *xdt* is a client of **mwm**, if you end the *mwm* session, the desktops will close as well. There will be some copyright notices (click on them to get rid of them) and a window titled either *General Desktop*, *Power Desktop*, or *Admin Desktop*. These correspond to increasing levels of confidence in using unix, and are set by you. If this is the first time you have called *xdt* it will ask you if you want to run through a tutorial session. This tutorial session is always available by clicking on *Help* on a Desktop window, and selecting *Getting started*. Selecting *Desktop Overview* will invoke *info* and put you in the section dealing with AIX Desktops. Desktops contain essentially 3 kinds of icons: files, folders, and program icons. Files usually look like sheets of paper, folders represent directories, and program icons run programs. To learn how to use these objects, follow the Desktop tutorial.

General observations:

The standard desktops are of limited use as they do not correspond to tasks but rather to levels of expertise and access. A more efficient approach is to create your own Desktops (*New Desktop* from the *File* button on any Desktop window) which are organized by task. For example, you could create a Desktop called **MAT5313** to hold all your work for that course. A window titled **MAT5313** will open. Now you can drag the icons (click on an icon and drag to the new location and release) of objects needed for this course into the **MAT5313** desktop. You are not moving the files, you are only creating a grouping of those files. A single icon can be placed in many desktops. For example, you can drag the editor icon, the icon of the directory holding your class work and mail icon into the desktop. Save the desktop (see the *File* button on that desktop) and then close it. If you now open the **MAT5313** desktop from any other desktop (*File* button again), you will find your work again.

Each icon is an *object* — it is in fact a program that responds to mouse operations. Clicking with the left button selects an object. Double clicking usually runs a certain program associated with that object. Double clicking on a directory icon opens the directory. Double clicking on a file invokes the standard editor on that file. If you click and hold with the right mouse button, you usually will get a pop-up menu for that icon. Generally speaking, double clicking with the left button will run the icon at a standard level, double clicking with the middle button will invoke that program with different options, and double clicking with the right button will run the program with more complex options. For example, if you double-click on the *find* icon with the left button, it will ask you for the file you are searching for and then search your home directory for that file. If you use the right button, it will ask you first for which directory to search and then the file to be found. Not all button combinations are always defined.

You can create your own objects by double-clicking (left button) on the *Open Object* icon in the *Power* toolshed. Not for the squeamish. As an exercise, fill in the table below; write the result of the indicated button operations on each of the objects listed.

object	single click			double click		
button	left	middle	right	left	middle	right
file						
directory						
desktop						
program						