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Subject: Re: Strange UNIX or strange IDL?  
Posted by [Vap User](#) on Fri, 06 Nov 1998 08:00:00 GMT  
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Harald Frey <hfrey@ssl.berkeley.edu> writes:

```
> IDL> print,!version
> { sparc sunos unix 5.1 Apr 13 1998}
> IDL> pwd=getenv('PWD')

> IDL> print,pwd
> /disks/sprite/disk1/hfrey/idl/image/wic
> IDL> pwd=getenv('pwd')
> IDL> print,pwd
>
> IDL>
>
```

Getenv returns the value of the input argument, provided there is an environmental variable currently defined matching that argument. It returns a null string if there isn't. PWD is always defined in the Cshell (not sure about sh, but I think it must be true for it as well). These environmental variables are, by convention, uppercase. Getenv('pwd') returns null because the environmental variable is 'PWD', not 'pwd'.

```
> With the name argument of getenv set to capital letters I get the right
> answer, but in small letters 'pwd' returns the null string. However, if
> I use the same command on the UNIX platform I get
>
> image1 [1] pwd
> /disks/sprite/disk1/hfrey/idl/image/wic
> image1 [2] PWD
> PWD: Command not found
>
> and UNIX does not like the capital letter 'PWD'.
>
> Any explanation?
>
```

'pwd' is a \*command\* in the cshell that returns the \*value\* of the environmental variable 'PWD'. 'PWD' is not any command -unless you are unwise enough to have to have a shell script or binary in your path with that name - so attempting to execute it at the command line will result in complaints from the shell.

```
> Harald Frey  
> hfrey@ssl.berkeley.edu  
>
```

All of this is very unix-centric and will probably not work on a non-unix machine. If you want portable code, try...

```
pro pwd  
cd,current=current & print,current  
end
```

which should work whatever the platform.

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I don't speak for JPL, it doesn't speak for me.

Well, not all the time, at least.

William Daffer <vapuser@haifung.jpl.nasa.gov>

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