
Subject: Re: Strange UNIX or strange IDL?
Posted by [davidf](#) on Wed, 04 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>
>
> 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?
```

I think you are confusing the command ("pwd"), which in UNIX (a case sensitive operating system) is always expressed in lowercase characters, with the environment variable ("PWD") which is always expressed in uppercase characters. (So you can tell them apart. :-)

Here IDL is doing exactly the correct thing and getting the Environment variable for you. When the environment variable is undefined, you get a null string back.

If you are really just trying to get the current working directory, here is an IDL program for you:

```
PRO PWD
CD, Current=thisDirectory
Print, thisDirectory
END
```

Wouldn't know how to get along without it. :-)

Cheers,

David

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Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>

Note: A copy of this article was e-mailed to the original poster.
