
Subject: Re: integrating new routines

Posted by [davidf](#) on Mon, 01 Mar 1999 08:00:00 GMT

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Gerhard (rappold@zedat.fu-berlin.de) writes:

```
> I'm just digging myself into IDL and want to add routines which I
> download.
>
> I'm working with IDL4.0(win), my original problem (still) is to get the
> size of a tabel to read it into an array. Therefore I download from
> <http://www.dfanning.com/tips/unknown_rows.html> the file
> <file_lines.pro> and put it in my working directory.
>
> If I call the routine (as said in the comment of the routine) with
>
> IDL> test=file_line(file)
>
> I just get the following result
>
> % Variable is undefined: FILE_LINE.
>
> I tried to compile the file and checked for the pathvariable but ... ???
>
> Probably a simple solution - but I don't know where to look
```

Probably my fault, I got this program from someone else and didn't test it much when I wrote the article above. As it happens, the modules in this file (there are three) are incorrectly arranged. The function TYPE should be the first module in the file, followed by FILE_SIZE and, finally, FILE_LINE.

If you just try to run the program as shown above it crashes because it references the TYPE function before it is compiled, which causes IDL to think it is a variable and not a function. I've fixed the program on my web page, but you can fix your own program by explicitly compiling the file before you run it:

```
IDL> .Compile file_line
IDL> test = File_Line(file)
```

If you still have problems, then you need to make sure you have a columnar data file named in the "file" variable. You could pick such a file like this:

```
IDL> file = Pickfile()
IDL> IF file NE " THEN test = File_Line(file) ELSE $
```

Print, 'No file selected.'

Finally, if you accidentally call the program (or any function) like this, without the parentheses:

```
test = File_Line
```

Then IDL will think FILE_LINE is a variable and not a function. To get this notion out of IDL's head, you will have to explicitly compile the function before you can call it correctly:

```
IDL> .Compile file_line  
IDL> test = File_Line(file)
```

Cheers,

David

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David Fanning, Ph.D.
Fanning Software Consulting
Phone: 970-221-0438 E-Mail: davidf@dfanning.com
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>
Toll-Free IDL Book Orders: 1-888-461-0155

[Note: This follow-up was e-mailed to the cited author.]
