
Subject: Re: simple string manipulation problem
Posted by [J.D. Smith](#) on Fri, 15 Oct 1999 07:00:00 GMT
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Jason Brookes wrote:

```
>
> hi all,
>
> here is a seemingly simple problem:
>
>
> PRO string_test
>
> PRINT,'why does','this happen ?',FORMAT = '(A,/,A)'
> error_message = STRING('why does','this happen ?',FORMAT = '(A,/,A)')
> PRINT,error_message
>
> PRINT,'why does','this happen ?',FORMAT = '(A,5x,A)'
> error_message = STRING('why does','this happen ?',FORMAT = '(A,5x,A)')
>
> PRINT,error_message
>
> END
>
>
> on running this routine, i see the following:
>
> IDL> string_test
> % Compiled module: STRING_TEST.
> why does
> this happen ?
> why does this happen ?
> why does   this happen ?
> why does   this happen ?
> IDL>
>
> the $64,000 question is ... WHY DOES THIS HAPPEN ? is it a bug,
> ahem, sorry... feature ? i do not understand why the newline character
> is not interpreted when i send the 'error_message' argument to the
> PRINT procedure via the STRING function. As can be seen, the output is
> consistent when the newline character is replaced by 5 space
> characters.
>
>
```

The reason is that PRINT and STRING are not totally consistent with each other where formatting is concerned. Print knows it is printing to something, and can easily insert a newline where it sees '/'. In fact,

in the manual, it says:

Record Terminators

q is zero or more slash (/) record terminators. On output, each record terminator causes the output to move to a new line. On input, each record terminator causes the next line of input to be read.

That is '/' operates on *output* only, and is likely silently ignored in the creation of strings.

To get the effect you want, try:

```
nl=string(10b)
error_message = STRING('why does',nl,'this happen ?',FORMAT = '(3A)')
```

JD

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```
