Subject: Re: Troubleshooting - Error Messages.
Posted by davidf on Wed, 01 Dec 1999 08:00:00 GMT

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Vicky A (vicky_a@my-deja.com) writes:

> Is there some standard procedure for dealing with compilation errors?
> (I mean errors that prevent a file compiling)
>
> I know an experienced user can just look at
> print n
> and say/think 'There should be a comma there.'
>
> Is that what it boils down to, IDL tells you Where the error is, and
> you work out What the error is, by recognition or something?

I'm afraid, Vicky, that is what it boils down to:
experience. :-)

But I'm here to tell you that after you have fixed
a thousand no-comma problems, you do tend to recognize them
fairly quickly. :-)

But the fact you are asking questions is incredibly
encouraging. I see all types in my IDL programming
classes, but I especially remember one person who
HATED to get help. He wanted to do EVERYTHING himself,
including make his own mistakes. I try to read what
people want, so although I saw him struggling with
his programming exercise and I offered to help a
couple of times, he wasn't having it. He struggled
for about an hour and a half, refusing to give up.
The class and I moved on to another topic, which
he completely missed. Finally, he admitted defeat
and asked for my help.

"You're missing a comma here," I said, smiling.

That was it. One comma that I noticed was missing
one and a half hours ago and was begging to tell him,
if only he had allowed me to.

I'm all for struggling. It is really the only way
to gain experience. I try to make sure everyone in my
classes struggles a bit. But one and a half hours over
a comma is WAY too much. (Although I'll bet it's the
first thing he looks for if we wasn't so discouraged
that he gave up IDL programming completely.) Ask for help.

I solve about half the problems people have in classes
just by coming over and looking over their shoulders.
The problems just go away. No kidding. :-)

After five minutes, go find somebody to look over
your shoulder. That's my best advice. :-)

Good programming!

David

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