
Subject: Re: David: for your book ?

Posted by [Martin Schultz](#) on Tue, 15 Aug 2000 07:00:00 GMT

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Craig Markwardt wrote:

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>
> Martin Schultz <martin.schultz@dkrz.de> writes:
>> Hi,
>>
>>   Testing IDL's capabilities is always dangerous: you might get more
>>   than you ask for!
>>
>>   What would you expect to get out of the following:
>>
>>   test = [ 'dir1/', 'directory2/', 'another_directory/' ]
>>   print, strmid(test, 0, strlen(test)-1)
>
>   Hmm, I got an error message!
>
>   IDL> test = [ 'dir1/', 'directory2/', 'another_directory/' ]
>   IDL> print, strmid(test, 0, strlen(test)-1)
>   % STRMID: Expression must be a scalar in this context: <LONG   Array>.
>   % Execution halted at: $MAIN$
>
>   IDL> print, !version
>   { alpha OSF unix 5.2 Oct 30 1998}
>
>   Is this something new in IDL 5.3?
>
```

Apparently so! What I get as a result is a 3x3 matrix containing in the first column all directory namews truncated to a length of 4, in the second column 10, and in the third column StrLen(test[2]-1). But I am glad you point this out.

As an aside, I recently found another problem in terms of backward compability (I am sure something similar was already mentioned in this newsgroup, but this was the first time I had this problem):

I tried to write a routine that takes advantage of the new StrMatch and StRegex functions in 5.3. In order to ensure backward compatibility, I enclosed these function calls with

```
IF !Version.Release GE 5.3 THEN BEGIN
ENDIF
```

However, a colleague tells me: no chance! The program will report a syntax error when run in IDL 5.2! So, the problem is that IDL looks for a function of this name during compile stage and doesn't care if it will ever be used. Only help is to write two little dummy functions named stregeex.pro and strmatch.pro which do nothing but print a warning message. And so I did. Works nicely, and you don't even have to test for the release number because these two functions are internal in 5.3 and hence they are discovered before anything on disk can be found.

Just a little bedtime story ;-)

Cheers,
Martin

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```
