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Subject: Re: subtle but important  
Posted by [Paul van Delst](#) on Fri, 27 Apr 2001 16:12:05 GMT  
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Craig Markwardt wrote:

```
>
> Randall Skelton <rhskelto@atm.ox.ac.uk> writes:
>> On Fri, 27 Apr 2001, Liam E. Gumley wrote:
>>
>>> This is a subtle but important point. DOUBLE() is a type conversion
>>> function [snip]
>>
>> While we are on the subject of 'subtle but important points' in IDL...
>>
>> I also learned today that for integers the default length is 16-bit unless
>> you use the "COMPILE_OPT DEFINT32" statement. Try "print, 1000*1000" in
>> IDL.
>
> Appending "L" to integers saves a lot of grief later on.
```

This is an understatement

Maybe it's my fortran background, but I always stick an "L" on the end of integers so I know (and others who read the code after me) that this value is a LONG (read: 4 byte) integer, even for silly stuff like

```
n = 3L
FOR i = 0L, n - 1L DO BEGIN
.....
ENDFOR
```

In this case there's no need but one day someone might make "n" greater than what a 2-byte int can hold.

Don't they teach this sort of stuff (and the floating point representation stuff) in computing/science courses anymore?

paulv

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Paul van Delst            A little learning is a dangerous thing;  
CIMSS @ NOAA/NCEP        Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring;  
Ph: (301)763-8000 x7274   There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,  
Fax:(301)763-8545        And drinking largely sobers us again.  
paul.vandelst@noaa.gov            Alexander Pope.

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