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Subject: Re: IDL and 'nice' question

Posted by [nmw](#) on Thu, 28 Jun 2001 16:06:17 GMT

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In article <onsngkaabp.fsf@cow.physics.wisc.edu>, Craig Markwardt  
<craigmnet@cow.physics.wisc.edu> writes:

>

> Randall Skelton <rshkelto@atm.ox.ac.uk> writes:

>

>

>> Hi all,

>>

>> I have a question regarding setting the priority of IDL on a \*nix  
>> operating system. There are certain instances when it is desirable to  
>> set the priority of idl to a lower priority with the nice command. Of  
>> course, typing 'idl' at the command-line is actually a front-end to a shell  
>> script and not an actual binary. Are there any foreseeable problems in  
>> starting the idl binary directly with 'nice -19 \$IDL\_DIR/bin/idl' as  
>> opposed to starting the shell script?

>

> Before you go get yourself all twisted in a knot of DLMS, I think  
> things are alot easier than you thing.

>

> First thing, I think you are confusing low and high priority. For the  
> non-unix among us, the "nice" command allows a user to set the process  
> priority, which is essentially how much attention the CPU will give a  
> program. Running programs with low priority are readily bumped in  
> favor of higher priority programs. A \*positive\* nice number indicates  
> a lower priority -- it is more "nice" to others; a negative nice  
> number is a higher priority. Thus your use of "-19" and "low  
> priority" don't seem to be the right mix.

If you are a windows user I would recommend that you skip press the "next"  
button, or whatever goes onto the next message in your newsreader.

Actually the value -19 is the lowest priority you can normally set with  
nice. It's one of the quirks of the nice command that the argument looks  
like a negative number but actually means increase the nice value by that  
amount. This \*is\* UNIX, you have to expect these idiosyncrasies.

Most versions of nice now accept a more reasonable argument "-n nice\_value"  
which is unsigned for an increase in "niceness" and negative for a decrease.

>

> Second, I believe that a process's "nice" level is inherited by any  
> subprocesses. [ That has to be the case, otherwise a program could  
> escape it's priority constraints by spawning a new copy of itself. ]  
> So it shouldn't matter that the "idl" command is a script.

Indeed. In fact, the script exec's the IDL binary so it is actually the same process with the same nice value.

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