Subject: Re: Unsatisfactory 'file_test()' behavior
Posted by Paul van Delst on Mon, 17 Dec 2001 15:23:22 GMT

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David Fanning wrote:
>
> Matt Feinstein (mfein@clark.net) writes:
>
>> If I do
>>
>> e = file_test('')
>>
>> that is, test for the existence of a file whose name is a zero-length
>> string, I get e = 1. This is not good ! (Using IDL v5.4 WinNT 4.0).
>
> The reasons for this are obscure, but have to due
> with the quantum properties of vacuums. It turns
> out that you can never say that a particular
> unit of space is "empty", since quantum fluctuations
> cause physical elements to appear, however
> briefly.

But, you can only claim this if you can quantify the non-emptiness in some way. IDL apparently
can. And the answer is '1'. That's pretty cool.

paulv

p.s.:

IDL> print, !version
{ x86 linux unix 5.4.1 Jan 16 2001   32   32}
IDL> print, file_test('')
       0

Looks like it may have something to do with the, uh..er, "fluctuating properties" of Windows.

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