Subject: Re: [Offtopic] Re: Strange problem
Posted by Jeff Hester on Fri, 07 Dec 2001 07:57:06 GMT
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And if you thought that was fun, try the following on for size:

```
IDL> print,32767+1
```

The amusing thing is that without even knowing it, your response proves my point.

We could go on to a discussion of numerical diffusion if somebody wants to start up a counter (integer, please - 32 bit unsigned) of the number of brains that explode.

Sorry, but I've really needed a good laugh for a while, and this thread has provided it. It has even made for some amusing lunch-time conversation. But all good things must come to an end. Besides, pulling the wings off flies is not sporting. I should be ashamed.

In all seriousness, if you don't understand why this issue is entirely about the precision of floating point numbers -- if the problem is not completely obvious to you -- and if you are trying to actually use IDL to do anything that anyone will ever care about, however vaguely, then you really should go and take a basic computing class or two. You are in serious danger of producing garbage without even being able to recognizing it as such, or having the slightest clue where it came from. You would not be the first to announce to the world that you had "discovered" something that turned out to be nothing more than your own ignorance of the pitfalls of numerical computing.

My comment about IDL was also serious. IDL is an extraordinarily powerful tool. I could not easily do what I do without it. But at the same time, it is a loaded weapon left in an unlocked cabinet.

I'm not sure whether the next line should be, "C'est la vie," "C'est la guerre," or "O caveat emptor."

Or maybe: you forth love if honk then

(Evidence of a misspent youth.)

Bhautik Joshi wrote:

>> The danger of IDL is that it allows people access to tools about which
>> they have no knowledge.
>> If the fact that floating point representations of numbers have limited
>> precision comes as a
>> shock, one can only wonder...
> As far as I can tell the issue wasn't about limited prescision. Unless
> its a fractional representation, *any* number is going to have a limited
> degree of prescision (whether thats on paper or in the computer) - thats
> something you learn in high school.
>
> The subtle issue of a floating point counter confusing the inequality
> operator in a loop isn't something thats obvious to everybody.
>
>> Is there an emoticon for "shudder in abject fear"?
> No. However, there is an emoticon for when drink international roast
> coffee.
>
> :E
>
> it demonstrates the process of your mouth disentegrating in abject
> objection to the awful aroma that can only be INTERNATIONAL ROAST.
>
> --
> /---(__)----- ----\
> | nbj@imag.wsahs.nsw.gov.au | phone: 0404032617 |..|--\ -moo |
> | ICQ #: 2464537 | http://cow.mooh.org | |--| |
> |-------------------------+---------------------\OO/|| ------/
> | international |
> | roast. my sanity has gone |
> | its lost forever |
> \-------------------------/

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