Subject: Re: Incorrect behavior of /NAN
Posted by David Fanning on Sat, 06 Apr 2002 01:57:51 GMT
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James Kuyper (kuyper@gscmail.gsfc.nasa.gov) writes:

> The number of ball bearings produced in a given city during a specified
> time period can be expressed as a sum over the amounts produced by each
> ball bearing plant in that city. What should the value of that sum be,
> for a city that has no ball bearing plants? I'd say that it's definitely
> a number, and definitely 0. I think that this is the most reasonable
> value for the sum of almost any variable-length list, when that list
> happens to have a length of 0. It's also the natural result of the most
> obvious algorithm for calculating the sum.

I agree. I was thinking about this while I was
feeding balls to my tennis team. (Don't ask,
please.) A sum is a counting operation.

"How many marbles are in the box?"

"None. The box is full of cupcakes."

Then the sum of marbles in the box is 0.

Seems pretty straightforward to me. But then
I've never understood the whole Christian/Muslim
thing either. :-(

Cheers,

David

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