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Subject: Re: FILE\_EXPAND\_PATH

Posted by [Jonathan Joseph](#) on Thu, 03 Jul 2003 21:14:49 GMT

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Yes, it looks like there is a bug. I received this reply from an "informed source at RSI" who wished to remain anonymous.

-Jonathan

- > Your posting about FILE\_EXPAND\_PATH caught my attention, so I
- > had a look. You've uncovered a bug in Windows IDL that is really
- > a bug in the underlying Windows GetFullPathName() function...
  
- > Well...maybe it's an undefined behavior instead of a bug...
- > the Windows documentation is not all that clear on the subject.
- > However, the design/documentation of that function is such that it
- > does not seem that they intended to support it.
  
- > In any event, I agree with you that IDL's FILE\_EXPAND\_PATH should
- > return the CWD in this case, as it does for Unix. There are a couple
- > different possible results that might be considered reasonable in
- > this case. One is to return a NULL string, the other is to return
- > the CWD. Of the two, the second seems most useful (though I must
- > say that both seem useless --- this is really a "Don't Care" case).
  
- > I've added a workaround to IDL for Windows, in which it feeds "."
- > to GetFullPathName() instead of "" in the case of NULL paths,
- > and so, now my development build of IDL gets it right on Windows
- > too. I've checked in a regression test to ensure that it stays
- > fixed.
  
- > And, I'll see to it that the documentation is updated to say what
- > happens.
  
- > Now for the bad news... IDL 6.0 is done. It's tested, packaged,
- > and going to hit the duplicator imminently. It would be very, very
- > expensive to stop that process, fix this very minor issue, and
- > then re-roll. So, IDL 6.0 will not have the fix I put in today.
- > The next release following it will...
  
- > Below, please find file\_expand\_path2.pro, which you can add to
- > your local IDL library and use as a workaround to your issue until
- > the next IDL shows up. I hope it helps.
  
- > Thanks...

```
function file_expand_path2, path
```

```
; Work around a problem with the real FILE_EXPAND_PATH under MS  
; Windows: Passing in a NULL path returns a garbage character  
; instead of returning the current working directory. The problem  
; stems from the underlying Windows GetFullPathName() function.  
;  
; This problem exists in IDL 5.4-6.0, but should be fixed in the  
; next IDL release after 6.0.
```

```
if (path eq '') then CD, CURRENT=r else r = FILE_EXPAND_PATH(path)  
return, r
```

```
end
```

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Jonathan Joseph wrote:

```
>  
> I have IDL 5.5 on Windows and 5.6 on Solaris. I am using the  
> FILE_EXPAND_PATH function, but am not getting the behavior I would  
> like on the Windows platform. It works well in all cases except if  
> I pass the null string ''. On the unix version, I get back what I  
> expect, which is the current working directory. On the Windows  
> platform I get back garbage: a short string of meaningless  
> characters.  
>  
> Does anyone know if this behavior is fixed in 5.6 for windows? Or  
> is this function undefined for the null string?  
>  
> Thanks.  
>  
> -Jonathan
```

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