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Subject: Re: Programming annoyances

Posted by [Kenneth P. Bowman](#) on Fri, 09 Sep 2005 21:44:41 GMT

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In article <1126300702.285794.90680@g43g2000cwa.googlegroups.com>, swingnut@gmail.com wrote:

> I tried putting N\_REFR into a separate pro file, but I got the same  
> behavior. I eventually changed the function name to be N\_refr, and now  
> it seems to work but unreliably. I've fiddled with changing the  
> function call to match, but the subtleties of case sensitivity seem to  
> be showing up. This happens whether both at the IDL prompt and in  
> idlde. In any case, what can cause this happen?

The function N\_REFR should be in a file called n\_refr.pro. Obviously that file must be in IDL's search path. Internally IDL is case insensitive, but filenames should be all lowercase for portability.

> Second, on the occasions when the program does run, when it reaches the  
> end of the main procedure, IDL prints two or three error messages to  
> the log:

>  
> Program caused arithmetic error: Floating point divide by 0  
> Program caused arithmetic error: Floating underflow

>  
> and sometimes

>  
> Program caused arithmetic error: Floating overflow

>  
> I added a tracing statement to determine for sure that this happens at  
> the end, and sure enough, it is not generated by anything in the code,  
> though I could imagine it being generated by something being left out at  
> the end. Any ideas?

Floating underflow errors can usually be ignored safely.

Overflow and divide by zero errors generally should not be ignored (unless you don't mind getting Inf's and NaN's for answers). You can use the FINITE function to find Inf's and NaN's in your variables. Personally, I make a point of ensuring that my programs do not generate exceptions other than, possibly, underflows.

Check out the !EXCEPT system variable. Setting !EXCEPT = 2 forces IDL to report exceptions after each IDL statement, which should help you identify the exact location where the exception occurs.

Ken Bowman

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