## Subject: Re: file_lines and expand path
Posted by Paul Van Delst[1] on Fri, 04 Aug 2006 18:04:00 GMT
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FL wrote:
> Hi,
>
> I am implementing file_lines in FL and was wondering what to return when
> the input path expands to multiple files. The IDL reference guide says
> nothing. I have run IDL and got curious result:
>
> IDL> help, file_lines('*.pro')
> <Expression>    LONG64    =              15
>
> I have 448 .pro files in the current directory, with a total of 10k lines.
> IDL seems to be randomly picking a single file and reporting its length
> (probably the first match in readdir()).
>
> What do you expect to get?
>
> Possibilities:
>
> 1. never expand (but why do we have NOEXPAND then?)
> 2. give an error message if the expansion results in more than one file
> 3. return the total length of files
> 4. return the total length of files if a new keyword TOTAL was set
> 5. do as IDL, pick a single file silently

Well, if the routine allows for wildcard inputs, then I wouldn't expect *any* of the above.

What I would expect would be an array (in this case 448 elements in size) containing the
lengths of *each* file that matched the wildcard expression, e.g.

IDL> help, file_lines('*.pro')
<Expression>    LONG64    = Array[448]

Just because IDL does it wrong, doesn't mean you have to. :o)

paulv

p.s. Maybe FL should have the ability to run just like IDL. I.e. you set some sort of
environment variable, say, FL_RUNLIKE_IDL=true, and it performs like IDL (i.e. giving the
incorrect result (IMO) as in the above example). Set it to false, and FL behaves like a
regular person would intuitively expect. :o)

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