Subject: Math Question
Posted by David Fanning on Sun, 29 Oct 2006 16:02:56 GMT
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Folks,

OK, I get the feeling that I am going to be referred to
my own web page with this question:

http://www.dfanning.com/math_tips/sky_is_falling.html

And it is certainly true that I have been watching WAY
too much TV lately (World Series, you know), but here is
my question. How does one explain the following two
IDL commands?

```
IDL> Help, (-0.1)^2.0
 <Expression>    FLOAT     =     0.0100000
IDL> Help, (-0.1)^2.01
 <Expression>    FLOAT     =         -NaN
```

In general, raising a negative number to any integer
power seems to produce a real number, whereas raising
a negative number to a non-integer power causes a NAN.

I am sure this is explained in one of those textbooks
covered with dust in my garage, but I thought one of
you math guys could rescue me from a beautiful day
spent covered with dust. :-)

Cheers,

David
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Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: http://www.dfanning.com/
Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")