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Subject: Re: file\_expand\_path

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 13 Dec 2006 00:11:03 GMT

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damonanomad@gmail.com writes:

```
> I am trying to to use IDL and have run into some a strange behavior
> in 6.2 using file_expand_path. The following lines illustrate what I
> am seeing:
>
> IDL> file_a=file_expand_path('full28field.table')
> IDL> print, file_a
> C:\DocSet\MyDoc\IDL\working\full28field.table
> IDL> print, file_test(file_a)
>      0
> IDL> file_b='C:\DocSet\MyDoc\IDL\working\FieldInfo\full28field.ta ble'
> IDL> print, file_test(file_b)
>      1
>
> As can be seen above, the path that it is returning is not the true
> path of the file but I don't know why it isn't.
```

Probably because that function doesn't try to determine the "true path" of the file. It just "builds" a path from wherever you happen to be located at the moment you execute the function. That is, if your current working directory is C:\somewhere, then when you execute the function you get this:

```
IDL> Print, File_Expand_Path('foo.pro')
C:\somewhere\foo.pro
```

This is true whether foo.pro exists or not! (This is basically the way FILEPATH works, but perhaps the name of this function doesn't disappoint you with inflated expectations.)

```
> The search path that I
> have set in "Preferences" (in addition to default) is
> 'C:\DocSet\MyDoc\IDL' and its sub-directories. (note that
> '\DocSet\MyDoc' = '\Documents and Settings\user\My Documents' in
> reality)
> Any ideas out there why I am running into this problem? Suggestions
> would be greatly appreciated.
```

You will have to get into the directory where the file exists before you execute the command:

```
IDL> CD, 'fieldinfo'  
IDL> Print, File_Expand_Path('full28field.table')  
C:\DocSet\MyDoc\IDL\working\FieldInfo\full28field.table
```

Cheers,

David

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David Fanning, Ph.D.  
Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.  
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>  
Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

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