
Subject: Re: Why float is called as 'float', not 'real'?
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Sat, 24 Mar 2007 05:51:42 GMT
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DirtyHarry writes:

> Is there any particular reason to call 'float' instead of 'real'?

Personal computing didn't really get started until the late 1970s. The IBM PC was released in about 1981. At that time there were still a lot of "hippies" in graduate school, and they were always talking about "getting real." Since computers were not all that accurate at first, decimal point values seemed to "float around" a lot. You couldn't put a lot of faith in a number, even if it was expressed to six or eight decimal places.

So between people getting sick and tired of hearing about getting "real", and the computer values "floating", these numbers came to be called "floats" rather than "reals".

Cheers,

David

P.S. My youngest turned 18 today. It is possible I've had more wine than is probably good for me. :-)

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