
Subject: Re: IDL sorting

Posted by [Karl Schultz](#) on Thu, 18 Oct 2007 21:58:15 GMT

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wlandsman <wlandsman@gmail.com> wrote:

> On Oct 18, 2:30 pm, Karl Schultz <k...@io.frii.com> wrote:

>> Because it is not a **stable** sort. Stable sorting algorithms preserve
>> the order of equal keys.

>>

>>> IDL just uses the sort algorithm of the underlying OS. As far as I
>>> am aware, the SORT function on Linux boxes **does** preserve the order
>>> of equal values, but that on Mac and Windows machines does not. I
>>> would be interested to hear if anyone finds any exceptions to this
>>> rule.

>>

>> Are you using this SORT function from the command line? If so, you
>> are using a shell function or a sort program in your PATH. Someone
>> probably decided that a stable sort made more sense for people sorting
>> things from the command line or from shell scripts. Reasonable.

>>

>

> I don't understand this paragraph. I am just using the IDL intrinsic
> SORT command. On every Linux box I have ever been on, it appears
> that the C lib sort algorithm used by IDL SORT() **is** stable, whereas
> it is **not** stable on Windows or MacOS.

>

When you said "SORT function on Linux boxes", I thought you meant from the
Linux command line. My bad.

So it looks like the qsort() implementation on the Linux distros you tried
happens to be stable. That's all.

--

Karl Schultz kws@frii.com

There are 844,739 ways to enjoy a Waffle House hamburger.
