
Subject: Re: IDL sorting

Posted by [wlandsman](#) on Thu, 18 Oct 2007 20:43:19 GMT

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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.

But I like the idea of adding a /STABLE keyword to SORT. Thanks, --
Wayne
