

On Apr 8, 6:13 pm, David Fanning <n...@dfanning.com> wrote:

> beer in the house again, and it occurred to me that I should
> have a page listing the 10 or 15 most common IDL programming
> errors with their solutions. But I can only think of three.
>
> Here are the three errors I most commonly see in IDL programs.

Using the assignment operator '=' instead of comparison 'eq' in a conditional test.

One way to be defensive about this is to be in the habit of putting the constant value on the left side, so the compiler catches the syntax error long before runtime. For example, this will fail the conditional, but happily reassign the value of a to 0:

```
IDL>  
a=5  
IDL> if ( a = 0 ) then print,  
'OK'  
IDL>  
print,a  
    0
```

Also a bit of a bear to debug, depending on the conditional consequences, and how important it is for a to stay 5...

Whereas this will let the compiler find the problem long before you run it:

```
IDL>  
a=5  
IDL> if ( 0 = a ) then  
print,'OK'
```

```
if ( 0 = a ) then  
print,'OK'
```

```
^  
% Syntax
```

error.

IDL>

On the other hand, my coworkers *hate* reading my "backwards comparison" style, so if you adopt this style, you'll get a lot of odd looks at walkthroughs.

MJ
