Subject: Comparison operators and floating-point errors
Posted by MarioIncandenza on Mon, 19 Apr 2010 18:31:44 GMT

```
IDL> nan=1/0.0
% Program caused arithmetic error: Floating divide by 0
IDL> print, -0.1 > nan
        Inf
IDL> print, -0.1 < nan
   -0.100000
IDL> print, 1 gt nan
   0
IDL> print, 1 lt nan
    1
```

I thought the rule was "Any calculation involving a NaN will produce
NaN."
Has it been this way since the dawn of time? I'm sure it has.

I have found a few uses for NaN in IDL over the years, and now I have
to come up with new ones.

For instance (the one that led me to track this down), I use NaN to
exclude areas from contour plots. There are other ways, but none quite
as simple and flexible.