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Subject: Re: Preferences gone mad

Posted by [Michael Galloy](#) on Thu, 18 Nov 2010 20:32:29 GMT

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On 11/18/10 12:07 PM, Paulo Penteado wrote:

>  
> It appears that a previously well behaved IDL installation has gone  
> crazy with preference setting for one user. For other users on the  
> same computer, things look normal. And the same seems to occur from  
> the Workbench or the command line:  
>  
> IDL> p=pref\_get('IDL\_PATH')  
> IDL> print,p  
> +/usr/local/gpulib:<IDL\_DEFAULT>  
> IDL> p+=':+/some\_directory/'  
> IDL> print,p  
> +/usr/local/gpulib:<IDL\_DEFAULT>:+/some\_directory/  
> IDL> pref\_set,'IDL\_PATH',p,/commit  
> IDL> print,pref\_get('IDL\_PATH')  
> +/usr/local/gpulib:<IDL\_DEFAULT>:+/some\_directory/  
> IDL> exit  
>  
> Then, from a new session:  
>  
> IDL> print,pref\_get('IDL\_PATH')  
> +/usr/local/gpulib:<IDL\_DEFAULT>  
>  
> Where did the new preference go?  
>  
> The preferences file was updated; it contains:  
>  
> IDL\_PATH : +/usr/local/gpulib:<IDL\_DEFAULT>:+/some\_directory/  
>  
> The same happens if I change the path from the Workbench. It seems  
> that IDL is ignoring the preferences file. I already removed the  
> entire .idl directory, to let it be recreated, and it made no  
> difference. The gpulib directory shows up because there is an IDL\_PATH  
> environment variable.  
>  
> Am I going mad? Am I missing something?

Preference values can come from several locations, in order of priority:

1. the command line when starting IDL
2. an environment variable
3. the IDL distribution preference file
4. a user preference file
5. the default value

IDL uses the value from the highest priority location. So, here, the environment variable is trumping the user preference file.

The lesson: pick one method of setting preferences and stick to it. This is one reason why I have a slightly complicated system to set my path using preferences instead of using an environment variable.

Mike

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