
Subject: Re: HASH -- bug, or "feature"?

Posted by [Paul Van Delst\[1\]](#) on Wed, 20 Apr 2011 19:50:59 GMT

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It's not a bug or a feature. It's a property of hashes. And it's not peculiar to IDL. E.g. from the Ruby pickaxe:

<quote>

Compared with arrays, hashes have one significant advantage: they can use any object as an index. However, they also have a significant disadvantage: their elements are not ordered.

</quote>

Similarly with Python dictionaries.

Typically the need for hashes where insertion order is important leads to a subclass of Hash being created where the order is internally tracked.

cheers,

paulv

Gray wrote:

> Can anyone tell me why, when you create a hash, the elements are not
> in the order of the keys you give? And, even worse, when you index a
> hash with an array of keys, the resulting hash does not come out in
> the same order as the array?

>

> IDL> h = hash(['a','b','c','d'],indgen(4))

> IDL> print, h

> c: 2

> a: 0

> b: 1

> d: 3

> IDL> print, h[['a','c','d']]

> c: 2

> a: 0

> d: 3

>

> This is making my bookkeeping using hashes basically impossible.

>

> --Gray
