you seemed to have hit the nail on the head. i had confused the IDL variable !PATH with the environment variable, getenv('path').
IDL> help, getenv('path')
returns a null string.

could you also tell me the right way to fix it?

Anand.

On Wednesday, May 15, 2013 5:14:01 PM UTC+9, mschellens wrote:
> Am Dienstag, 14. Mai 2013 03:24:32 UTC+2 schrieb anand:
>
>> Hi,
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>
>> I am using IDL 8.1 on ubuntu 12.10. Additionally, I use SolarSoft, which is a package containing several libraries relevant to solar physics. I have to initiate the SolarSoft in IDL by typing 'sswidl' at the command prompt and not the simple 'idl'.
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>
>> The problem I face is that while a simple "spawn, 'ls'" command works perfectly fine while running 'idl', in 'sswidl' the output I get is:
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>>
>
>> IDL> spawn, 'ls'
>
>>
>
>> bash: ls: command not found
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>>
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>>
>
>> I run the 'sswidl' in C-shell. Whereas 'idl' can be run in both C-shell and bash; and spawn

works fine in both the shells.
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>
>> It is not simply about the spawn command, many other programs that run spawn are also not working. Hence, any help would be greatly appreciated.
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>
>> Anand.
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>
>
> Is the path environment variable set?
>
>
>
> Check with:
>
>
>
> PRINT,GETENV("PATH")
>
>
>
> Regards,
>
> Marc