
Subject: modifying hash/dict elements

Posted by [JDS](#) on Fri, 23 May 2014 13:23:25 GMT

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I wonder why this doesn't work:

```
IDL> h=hash()
```

```
IDL> h['foo']++
```

```
% Type conversion error: Unable to convert given STRING to Long64.
```

nor:

```
IDL> h=dictionary()
```

```
IDL> h.foo++
```

```
% Data of this type cannot be used with increment or decrement operators:  
  POINTER.
```

nor do keys auto-instantiate when referenced:

```
IDL> h.foo+=1
```

```
% Key does not exist: "FOO"
```

and yet:

```
IDL> h.foo=1
```

```
IDL> h.foo+=1
```

work fine.

I think dicts/hashes should auto-substantiate keys on any left-hand access, not just assignment, and that all elements of dicts/hashes should be available for any left-hand operation, including increment/decrement.

JD
