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Subject: Help with COM1 programming!

Posted by [penzes](#) on Mon, 27 Sep 1993 15:46:24 GMT

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The purpose of this posting is to try to clear up a problem

I am having with programming the COM1 port of my PC.

I am using IDL V3.1 for windows. I have written a widget based program to control a Sony Hi8 VCR which is attached to the serial port. This package has the capability to write to the port through a shrink wrap of the C commands (inp, inpw, outp, and outpw). Using these commands I can send the commands to the VCR to control it. My problem comes about when I try to get information back from the VCR. If I send for example, the command to return the time code on a tape, all that is returned is garbage. In all this there is a way to make it work. If I turn on the windows terminal emulation package, change the baud rate to 9600, and iconify the program, my IDL program works as expected. The same holds true if I start up PROCOMM Plus for Windows with a direct connection set up for COM1. As an aside, I had to program in a wait state even at 9600 baud. I would prefer to not have my end users have to go through a series of steps external to the IDL program to have the VCR controller function properly.

I have come to the conclusion (possibly wrong) that my problem comes from the fact that I am providing no port initialization commands. In an effort to remedy this I have attempted the following:

- 1) I talked to the MS technical programmers to check out what terminal.exe does on startup. The person I talked to didn't have source so the best thing he could tell me was that terminal probably enters some SetCommState info but he wasn't sure. While talking to him I checked all the control panel settings and they appear to be correct.
- 2) I talked to the IDL tech reps but their emphasis had been on the shrink wrapping and not on the port programming.
- 3) I tried spawning commands from within IDL that allowed me to use the DOS "Mode COM1" command to set the port characteristics. This didn't work but I think it should have since this would set the port hardware characteristics which I assume would be active until I turned off the PC.
- 4) I verified that it is a com problem by checking with a QBasic program. If I use the open command with the RS option (suppress detection of RTS) the Qbasic program will receive the requested info properly.
- 5) I spent some time with the tech reps on the PC hardware (Dell) trying to find out if they had done anything out of the ordinary regarding the serial port addressing. The answer was no (uses 3F8 for com1).
- 6) The last possibility which I have not yet explored is the use of a C program to change the port. IDL allows declarations to external (C or Fortran) routines. My problem is that I am pretty weak in C

