Subject: Re: IDL and 'nice' question Posted by Craig Markwardt on Thu, 28 Jun 2001 15:33:14 GMT View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Randall Skelton <rhskelto@atm.ox.ac.uk> writes:

> Hi all,

>

- > I have a question regarding setting the priority of IDL on a \*nix
- > operating system. There are certain instances when it is desirable to
- > set the priority of idl to a lower priority with the nice command. Of
- > course, typing 'idl' at the command-line is actually a front-end to a shell
- > script and not an actual binary. Are there any foreseeable problems in
- > starting the idl binary directly with 'nice -19 \$IDL\_DIR/bin/idl' as
- > opposed to staring the shell script?

Before you go get yourself all twisted in a knot of DLMs, I think things are alot easier than you thing.

First thing, I think you are confusing low and high priority. For the non-unix among us, the "nice" command allows a user to set the process priority, which is essentially how much attention the CPU will give a program. Running programs with low priority are readily bumped in favor of higher priority programs. A \*positive\* nice number indicates a lower priority -- it is more "nice" to others; a negative nice number is a higher priority. Thus your use of "-19" and "low priority" don't seem to be the right mix.

Second, I believe that a process's "nice" level is inherited by any subprocesses. [That has to be the case, otherwise a program could escape it's priority constraints by spawning a new copy of itself.] So it shouldn't matter that the "idl" command is a script.

If you really need to nice the binary itself, why not copy the existing idl script to a new file called "niceidl" and add the nice command at the last step?

Good luck, Craig		
Craig B. Markwardt, Ph.D. Astrophysics, IDL, Finance,	•	•

Subject: Re: IDL and 'nice' question Posted by nmw on Thu, 28 Jun 2001 16:06:17 GMT

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In article <onsngkaabp.fsf@cow.physics.wisc.edu>, Craig Markwardt <craigmnet@cow.physics.wisc.edu> writes:

> Randall Skelton <rhskelto@atm.ox.ac.uk> writes:

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- > priority" don't seem to be the right mix.

If you are a windows user I would recommend that you skip press the "next" button, or whatever goes onto the next message in your newsreader.

Actually the value -19 is the lowest priority you can normally set with nice. It's one of the quirks of the nice command that the argument looks like a negative number but actually means increase the nice value by that amount. This \*is\* UNIX, you have to expect these idiosyncrasies.

Most versions of nice now accept a more reasonable argument "-n nice\_value" which is unsigned for an increase in "niceness" and negative for a decrease.

>

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- > escape it's priority constraints by spawning a new copy of itself. ]
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Indeed. In fact, the script exec's the IDL binary so it is actually the same process with the same nice value.

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