
Subject: the precision of PRINT and HELP statements
Posted by [george.mccabe](#) on Thu, 04 Oct 2001 16:46:02 GMT
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hello,

this one made me laugh when i realized what was going on -

```
IDL> help, chkN
CHKN      LONG      =      140486
IDL> help, float(Nhb)/Nreq0
<Expression>  FLOAT  =      140486.
IDL> print, chkN - float(Nhb)/Nreq0
      -0.500000
```

perhaps one should expect IDL's PRINT statement to act this way,

```
IDL> print, float(Nhb)/Nreq0
      140486.
IDL> print, format='(g)', float(Nhb)/Nreq0
      140486.5
```

but, the HELP command i feel should show the actual value to the precision of the variable type.

is there a way to set the format of HELP output, or adjust system wide format settings?

thank you,
[george, george.mccabe@gsfc.nasa.gov](mailto:george.mccabe@gsfc.nasa.gov)

Subject: Re: the precision of PRINT and HELP statements
Posted by [R.Bauer](#) on Fri, 05 Oct 2001 06:29:51 GMT
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George McCabe wrote:

```
>
> hello,
>
> this one made me laugh when i realized what was going on -
>
> IDL> help, chkN
> CHKN      LONG      =      140486
> IDL> help, float(Nhb)/Nreq0
> <Expression>  FLOAT  =      140486.
> IDL> print, chkN - float(Nhb)/Nreq0
```

```

> -0.500000
>
> perhaps one should expect IDL's PRINT statement to act this way,
>
> IDL> print, float(Nhb)/Nreq0
> 140486.
> IDL> print, format='(g)', float(Nhb)/Nreq0
> 140486.5
>
> but, the HELP command i feel should show the actual value to the
> precision of the variable type.
>
> is there a way to set the format of HELP output, or adjust system wide
> format settings?
>
> thank you,
> george, george.mccabe@gsfc.nasa.gov

```

Dear George,

we have some routines which returns the format code of a value

http://www.fz-juelich.de/icg/icg1/idl_icglib/idl_source/idl_html/dbase/download/find_form.tar.gz

```

; EXAMPLE:
; numbers=[100,2.1345,1000.]
; print,find_form(numbers)
; F10.4
; print,find_form(numbers,/reduce_accuracy)
; F10.2
; print,find_form(-40010138.D)
; I9
; print,find_form(-40010138.D,/force)
; F10.0

```

http://www.fz-juelich.de/icg/icg1/idl_icglib/idl_source/idl_html/dbase/download/number_format.tar.gz

For further routines and licensing please have a look at
http://www.fz-juelich.de/icg/icg1/idl_icglib/idl_lib_intro.html

regards
Reimar

--

Reimar Bauer

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<http://www.fz-juelich.de/icg/icg1/>

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a IDL library at ForschungsZentrum Juelich

http://www.fz-juelich.de/icg/icg1/idl_icglib/idl_lib_intro.html

<http://www.fz-juelich.de/zb/text/publikation/juel3786.html>

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read something about linux / windows

<http://www.suse.de/de/news/hotnews/MS.html>