Subject: Re: Unsatisfactory 'file\_test()' behavior Posted by David Fanning on Mon, 17 Dec 2001 15:01:41 GMT View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Matt Feinstein (mfein@clark.net) writes:

```
If I do
e = file_test(")
that is, test for the existence of a file whose name is a zero-length
string, I get e = 1. This is not good! (Using IDL v5.4 WinNT 4.0).
```

The reasons for this are obscure, but have to due with the quantum properties of vacuums. It turns out that you can never say that a particular unit of space is "empty", since quantum fluctuations cause physical elements to appear, however briefly. IDL is frequently used to solve this type of cutting-edge problem.

Cheers,

David

--

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Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: http://www.dfanning.com/

Toll-Free IDL Book Orders: 1-888-461-0155

Subject: Re: Unsatisfactory 'file\_test()' behavior Posted by Paul van Delst on Mon, 17 Dec 2001 15:23:22 GMT View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

```
David Fanning wrote:
>
> Matt Feinstein (mfein@clark.net) writes:
```

```
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>>
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>>
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```

- > The reasons for this are obscure, but have to due
- > with the quantum properties of vacuums. It turns
- > out that you can never say that a particular
- > unit of space is "empty", since quantum fluctuations
- > cause physical elements to appear, however
- > briefly.

But, you can only claim this if you can quantify the non-emptiness in some way. IDL apparently can. And the answer is '1'. That's pretty cool.

paulv

```
p.s.:
```

```
IDL> print, !version { x86 linux unix 5.4.1 Jan 16 2001 32 32} IDL> print, file_test(")
```

Looks like it may have something to do with the, uh..er, "fluctuating properties" of Windows.

--

Paul van Delst Religious and cultural

CIMSS @ NOAA/NCEP purity is a fundamentalist

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Subject: Re: Unsatisfactory 'file\_test()' behavior Posted by Dick Jackson on Tue, 18 Dec 2001 16:09:06 GMT View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

```
"Paul van Delst" <paul.vandelst@noaa.gov> wrote in message
news:3C1E0DEA.7E4D534E@noaa.gov...
>> Matt Feinstein (mfein@clark.net) writes:
>>
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>>>
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> p.s.:
>
> IDL> print, !version
> { x86 linux unix 5.4.1 Jan 16 2001
                                       32
                                              32}
> IDL> print, file_test(")
```

```
0
>
>
> Looks like it may have something to do with the, uh..er, "fluctuating
properties" of Windows.
Fluctuating, indeed!...
=====
IDL Version 5.4 (Win32 x86). (c) 2000, Research Systems, Inc.
IDL> print, file_test(")
=====
IDL Version 5.5, Microsoft Windows (Win32 x86). (c) 2001, Research Systems,
Inc.
IDL> print, file_test(")
      0
Perhaps this is considered to be fixed now.
-Dick
Dick Jackson
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D-Jackson Software Consulting /
                                    http://www.d-jackson.com
                            / +1-403-242-7398 / Fax: 241-7392
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
```