

---

Subject: can't change PATH preference under Windows?

Posted by [Jeff N.](#) on Tue, 01 Aug 2006 22:34:02 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

Hi folks,

I'm using IDL 6.2 with WinXP. I've somehow managed to make it so that IDL won't let me change my path preferences using the preferences dialog box - my path folders are desensitized. According to the help file, this desensitization occurs when "higher priority" items set preferences, and these higher priority items are command line arguments or environment variables (so if, for ex., an environment variable sets the preference, the preference can't be changed during the session). The problem is that I'm currently using neither of these....but I have used command line arguments before. So my guess is that IDL still somehow thinks a command line argument is being used when it isn't. I've tried a simple computer restart as well as starting IDL with different means (a desktop shortcut, clicking on the executable itself, and using the windows command line). Nothing seemed to work. Does anyone have any suggestions as to how I could get myself out of this? I \*really\* need to customize my path very soon! :)

Jeff

---

---

Subject: Re: can't change PATH preference under Windows?

Posted by [Jeff N.](#) on Wed, 02 Aug 2006 16:53:29 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

Hi Karl,

That wasn't it either. I thought of this after my reply to Benjamin's post, and found nothing. Thanks for the suggestion though...I guess I'll either reinstall IDL, or, if I decide I can live with this potential problem and take the risk that nothing else is wrong, just use the workaround that Benjamin suggested.

Jeff

Karl Schultz wrote:

> On Tue, 01 Aug 2006 19:22:21 -0700, Jeff N. wrote:

>

>> Thanks Benjamin,

>>

>> I knew I could change !path, and I suppose i'll probably resort to

>> that, but I'm actually concerned about why this behavior is happening.

>> I'm working on a startup file that sets the path preference with

>> pref\_set based on a set of conditions, and I'd like 3 computers to have  
>> the same startup file...it's worked flawlessly on the 1st two, and now  
>> on this third machine i'm getting this weird behavior.  
>>  
>> Thanks for your quick reply though!  
>> Jeff  
>  
> On the third machine, you probably have the IDL\_PATH environment variable  
> set.  
>  
> Right-click My Computer  
> Properties  
> Advanced tab  
> Environment Variables  
>  
> Look for IDL\_PATH.  
>  
> When I set IDL\_PATH in my environment, I get exactly the behavior you  
> describe.  
>  
> Karl

---

---

Subject: Re: can't change PATH preference under Windows?  
Posted by [Doug Edmundson](#) on Wed, 02 Aug 2006 19:01:07 GMT  
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

Jeff N. wrote:

> Hi folks,  
>  
> I'm using IDL 6.2 with WinXP. I've somehow managed to make it so that  
> IDL won't let me change my path preferences using the preferences  
> dialog box - my path folders are desensitized. According to the help  
> file, this desensitization occurs when "higher priority" items set  
> preferences, and these higher priority items are command line arguments  
> or environment variables (so if, for ex., an environment variable sets  
> the preference, the preference can't be changed during the session).  
> The problem is that I'm currently using neither of these....but I have  
> used command line arguments before. So my guess is that IDL still  
> somehow thinks a command line argument is being used when it isn't.  
> I've tried a simple computer restart as well as starting IDL with  
> different means (a desktop shortcut, clicking on the executable itself,  
> and using the windows command line). Nothing seemed to work. Does  
> anyone have any suggestions as to how I could get myself out of this? I  
> \*really\* need to customize my path very soon! :)  
>  
> Jeff  
>

Jeff,

What happens if you try...

- (1) HELP, /PREFERENCES, [/FULL]
- (2) PREF\_SET, "IDL\_PATH", "junk" (don't do /COMMIT)

They'll give clues as to what IDL is thinking. You can also look in the .idl directory and poke around the preference files, comparing them with the machines that work.

Hope this helps,  
Doug

---

Subject: Re: can't change PATH preference under Windows?

Posted by [Jeff N.](#) on Wed, 02 Aug 2006 23:10:54 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

Doug:

Help, /preferences gives me:

```
IDL_PATH          DISTFILE = '+h:\progs\idl;<IDL_DEFAULT>'
IDL_PATH_CACHE_DISABLE  USERFILE = True(1)
```

The user file being referred to by IDL\_PATH\_CACHE\_DISABLE is my idl.pref file in the .idl variable (which, actually, I don't remember setting). I have, on the other hand, previously set IDL\_PATH to the value it has now, but I did that with the GUI (File, Preferences, Path). I'm not sure what DISTFILE is referring to, but it's clearly referring to a start up file of some sort.

Here's the contents of idl.pref:

```
IDL_PATH_CACHE_DISABLE : True
IDL_WDE_START_DIR : C:\Documents and Settings\jeffn\Desktop
```

and here's what I get when I try pref\_set:

```
IDL> PREF_SET, "IDL_PATH", "junk"
PREF_SET: Preference value is read only because it has a current
effective source (distribution file) with a higher priority than the
user preference file: IDL_PATH.
Execution halted at: $MAIN$
```

This error message from PREF\_SET is actually how I found out about this problem, I encountered it the first time I tried to run a startup batch

file that sets my path based on whether or not an external hard drive is present.

See anything that might help? Thanks for helping all of you!

Jeff

Doug Edmundson wrote:

> Jeff N. wrote:

>> Hi folks,

>>

>> I'm using IDL 6.2 with WinXP. I've somehow managed to make it so that  
>> IDL won't let me change my path preferences using the preferences  
>> dialog box - my path folders are desensitized. According to the help  
>> file, this desensitization occurs when "higher priority" items set  
>> preferences, and these higher priority items are command line arguments  
>> or environment variables (so if, for ex., an environment variable sets  
>> the preference, the preference can't be changed during the session).  
>> The problem is that I'm currently using neither of these....but I have  
>> used command line arguments before. So my guess is that IDL still  
>> somehow thinks a command line argument is being used when it isn't.  
>> I've tried a simple computer restart as well as starting IDL with  
>> different means (a desktop shortcut, clicking on the executable itself,  
>> and using the windows command line). Nothing seemed to work. Does  
>> anyone have any suggestions as to how I could get myself out of this? I  
>> \*really\* need to customize my path very soon! :)

>>

>> Jeff

>>

>

> Jeff,

>

> What happens if you try...

>

> (1) HELP, /PREFERENCES, [/FULL]

> (2) PREF\_SET, "IDL\_PATH", "junk" (don't do /COMMIT)

>

> They'll give clues as to what IDL is thinking. You can also look in the  
> .idl directory and poke around the preference files, comparing them with  
> the machines that work.

>

> Hope this helps,

> Doug

---

Subject: Re: can't change PATH preference under Windows?  
Posted by [Jeff N.](#) on Thu, 03 Aug 2006 02:06:12 GMT

Hi everyone,

Just wanted to let everyone know that I found the problem. Turns out that some damned fool (and by "some" damned fool I mean me) edited the idl.pref file found in the resource\pref folder, which I presume is a file that can contain customizations for all users, as opposed to the idl.pref file in my .idl directory. Everything works great now, and thank you all for your help!

Jeff

Jeff N. wrote:

```
> Doug:
>
> Help, /preferences gives me:
> IDL_PATH          DISTFILE = '+h:\progs\idl;<IDL_DEFAULT>'
> IDL_PATH_CACHE_DISABLE  USERFILE = True(1)
>
> The user file being referred to by IDL_PATH_CACHE_DISABLE is my
> idl.pref file in the .idl variable (which, actually, I don't remember
> setting). I have, on the other hand, previously set IDL_PATH to the
> value it has now, but I did that with the GUI (File, Preferences,Path).
> I'm not sure what DISTFILE is referring to, but it's clearly referring
> to a start up file of some sort.
>
> Here's the contents of idl.pref:
>
> IDL_PATH_CACHE_DISABLE : True
> IDL_WDE_START_DIR : C:\Documents and Settings\jeffn\Desktop
>
>
> and here's what I get when I try pref_set:
> IDL> PREF_SET, "IDL_PATH", "junk"
> PREF_SET: Preference value is read only because it has a current
> effective source (distribution file) with a higher priority than the
> user preference file: IDL_PATH.
> Execution halted at: $MAIN$
>
> This error message from PREF_SET is actually how I found out about this
> problem, I encountered it the first time I tried to run a startup batch
> file that sets my path based on whether or not an external hard drive
> is present.
>
> See anything that might help? Thanks for helping all of you!
> Jeff
>
```

>  
> Doug Edmundson wrote:  
>> Jeff N. wrote:  
>>> Hi folks,  
>>>  
>>> I'm using IDL 6.2 with WinXP. I've somehow managed to make it so that  
>>> IDL won't let me change my path preferences using the preferences  
>>> dialog box - my path folders are desensitized. According to the help  
>>> file, this desensitization occurs when "higher priority" items set  
>>> preferences, and these higher priority items are command line arguments  
>>> or environment variables (so if, for ex., an environment variable sets  
>>> the preference, the preference can't be changed during the session).  
>>> The problem is that I'm currently using neither of these....but I have  
>>> used command line arguments before. So my guess is that IDL still  
>>> somehow thinks a command line argument is being used when it isn't.  
>>> I've tried a simple computer restart as well as starting IDL with  
>>> different means (a desktop shortcut, clicking on the executable itself,  
>>> and using the windows command line). Nothing seemed to work. Does  
>>> anyone have any suggestions as to how I could get myself out of this? I  
>>> \*really\* need to customize my path very soon! :)  
>>>  
>>> Jeff  
>>>  
>>  
>> Jeff,  
>>  
>> What happens if you try...  
>>  
>> (1) HELP, /PREFERENCES, [/FULL]  
>> (2) PREF\_SET, "IDL\_PATH", "junk" (don't do /COMMIT)  
>>  
>> They'll give clues as to what IDL is thinking. You can also look in the  
>> .idl directory and poke around the preference files, comparing them with  
>> the machines that work.  
>>  
>> Hope this helps,  
>> Doug

---