
Subject: Re: Strange IDL string bug
Posted by [offenbrg](#) on Wed, 09 Aug 1995 07:00:00 GMT
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Justin Baker <justinb@bom.gov.au> writes:

> I have discovered an unusual bug with IDL strings (IDL V4.0) and was wondering
> if anyone else has seen it.

> I quickly discovered that there seems to be a problem with " quoted strings if
> they start with a digit.

> IDL> ok_string='12345'
> IDL> bad_sting="678910" ^
> % Syntax error.

> Can anyone shed any light on this problem ?

Somewhere along the way, RSI decided to make "xxx (where xxx are digits)
stand for "This number is Octal (base 8)" as opposed to "this number is a
string."

```
IDL> print, '123
123
IDL> print, "123
83
```

123 in *octal* = 83 in *decimal*.

One nasty side effect of this, of course, is that "123" is not a string,
but an octal number with a stray " mark at the end. Also, "12ab" isn't a
string, either, but an octal number with ab" stuck at the end.

This problem pre-dates IDL 4.0, by the way.

Joel

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"...And I am unanimous in this" - Mrs. Slocumbe

| Joel D Offenberg | offenbrg@fondue.gsfc.nasa.gov |
| Hughes STX, NASA/GSFC/LASP | I get paid to stare into space. |

Subject: Re: Strange IDL string bug
Posted by [Rolf P. W"urtz](#) on Wed, 09 Aug 1995 07:00:00 GMT
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Justin Baker <justinb@bom.gov.au> wrote:

>
> I quickly discovered that there seems to be a problem with " quoted strings if
> they start with a digit.
>

The error is due to the fact that "123 means the `_octal_` value of 123. How somebody could get this idea is beyond me. Even stranger than a leading zero, IMHO. To make it even more interesting, IDL does not check for unbalanced quotes, so the following works:

```
%print, '123  
123  
%print, "123  
83
```

Lovely, isn't it?

Rolf

```
+-----+  
| Rolf P. W'urtz | mailto:rolf@cs.rug.nl | URL: http://www.cs.rug.nl/~rolf/ |  
| Department of Computing Science, University of Groningen, The Netherlands |  
+-----+
```
