
Subject: Variable attributes and undef vars

Posted by [Lajos Foldy](#) on Thu, 12 Feb 2015 23:01:48 GMT

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From the IDL docs: "All IDL variables have special attributes that return information about the variable. These attributes are equivalent to calling the N_ELEMENTS, SIZE, or TYPENAME functions."

This does not work for undefined variables:

```
IDL> help, n_elements(a)
<Expression> LONG = 0
IDL> help, a.length
% Expression must be a structure in this context: A.
% Execution halted at: $MAIN$
IDL>
```

Bug or feature? :-)

regards,
Lajos

Subject: Re: Variable attributes and undef vars

Posted by [chris_torrence@NOSPAM](#) on Thu, 12 Feb 2015 23:17:31 GMT

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On Thursday, February 12, 2015 at 4:01:51 PM UTC-7, fawltyl...@gmail.com wrote:

> From the IDL docs: "All IDL variables have special attributes that return information about the variable. These attributes are equivalent to calling the N_ELEMENTS, SIZE, or TYPENAME functions."

>

> This does not work for undefined variables:

>

> IDL> help, n_elements(a)

> <Expression> LONG = 0

> IDL> help, a.length

> % Expression must be a structure in this context: A.

> % Execution halted at: \$MAIN\$

> IDL>

>

> Bug or feature? :-)

>

> regards,

> Lajos

Bug. I think I got worried that it would conflict with "static methods" and "static properties" on IDL classes, so by default it just throws an error. But it probably should just work. Especially because

it also doesn't work on !null variables either:

```
IDL> a = []
```

```
IDL> a.length
```

```
% Expression must be a structure in this context: A.
```

I'll think about the right approach...

-Chris
