
Subject: Running IDL through a unix pipe - obscure question
Posted by [Nathaniel Livesey](#) on Thu, 11 Apr 1996 07:00:00 GMT
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Hello there,

I am using IDL for unix (Linux at the moment, but would want to use other versions later). I am spawning a child process from an IDL program and communicating with it via a pipe (i.e. `spawn ...,unit=...`). The child process is in fact another IDL program doing widget type things designed to keep an eye on the progress of the parent while letting it get on with calculations.

Is there a way for the child to find out if there is something to be read from the pipe. If I use `READ` then the child process will obviously hang until something comes along. I know that the manual (e.g. page 18-7U of the V4 manual) explicitly says that there is no way to do it in IDL. I have tried keeping my eye on `FSTAT(0)` but that doesn't change until things are actually read. I was wondering if there was a nifty unixy type thing I can do to find out if there is something waiting to be read (e.g. a call to `ioctl?`). Obviously, I could create a file as some sort of flag, but if I am going to do that, I might as well not bother with the pipe!

I have briefly tried not using `XMANAGER`, but using `WIDGET_EVENT` directly with the `YIELD_TO_TTY` option, however that does not seem to work if the tty is a pipe. I have also tried using `WIDGET_CONTROL,TIMER..` type events to interrupt a `READ` but they are not generated while `READ` is waiting.

Bear in mind that the current version of Linux IDL does not support `CALL_EXTERNAL`, however, I will be moving to another unix platform before too long so I wouldn't rule out solutions that involve that.

Many thanks in advance for any help,

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