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Subject: Making a directory in an IDL routine.  
Posted by [D.Kennedy](#) on Thu, 04 Dec 1997 08:00:00 GMT  
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An usual request -  
Does anyone know how to make a directory from inside an IDL routine? I know its odd, but its the best way to organise a huge save set that'll be generated.

(And better yet, how to check if such a directory already exists).

I imagine that this is machine dependant - UNIX answers only needed.

--  
David Kennedy, Dept. of Pure & Applied Physics, Queen's University of Belfast  
Email: [D.Kennedy@Queens-Belfast.ac.uk](mailto:D.Kennedy@Queens-Belfast.ac.uk) | URL: <http://star.pst.qub.ac.uk/~dcjk/>  
My .sig was so clever that it actually escaped!

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Subject: Re: Making a directory in an IDL routine.  
Posted by [gurman](#) on Sun, 07 Dec 1997 08:00:00 GMT  
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In article <34870691.0@cfanews.harvard.edu>, [rpete@ascda3.harvard.edu](mailto:rpete@ascda3.harvard.edu)  
(Pete Ratzlaff) wrote:

> David Kennedy ([D.Kennedy@qub.ac.uk](mailto:D.Kennedy@qub.ac.uk)) wrote:  
>> An usual request -  
>> Does anyone know how to make a directory from inside an IDL  
>> routine? I know its odd, but its the best way to organise  
>> a huge save set that'll be generated.  
>  
>> (And better yet, how to check if such a directory already  
>> exists).  
>  
>> I imagine that this is machine dependant - UNIX answers  
>> only needed.  
>  
> 'spawn' can do both of these  
>  
> 1. To check if a directory exists:  
> IDL> dir='/home/me/mydir'  
> IDL> spawn, 'ls -a '+dir, result

This is better than findfile? I understand the latter has trouble with UFS directories with lots of entries, but still....

>  
> Now, check the length of RESULT[0]. If it is zero, then  
> DIR doesn't exist, otherwise DIR does exist.  
>  
> 2. To create a directory  
> IDL> spawn,'mkdir '+dir  
>  
> This may not be elegant, but it works.

The best part about findfile is that it's (relatively) OS-independent, and even has a keyword, COUNT, that is used to indicate there are no files meeting the filepath specification in the argument:

```
IDL> result = FINDFILE('<filespec>', COUNT = count)
```

e.g.

```
IDL> result = FINDFILE('/home/me/mydir', COUNT = count)
```

For some bizarre reason, the Digital UNIX version of IDL 5.0.3 cannot resolve "~<homedirectory>" in findfile --- you have to state explicitly where the home directory lives.

FWIW,

Joe Gurman

--

Joseph B. Gurman / NASA Goddard Space Flight Center/ Solar Data Analysis Center / Code 682  
/ Greenbelt MD 20771 USA / gurman@gsfc.nasa.gov / gurman@ari.net  
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Subject: Re: Making a directory in an IDL routine.  
Posted by [Martin Schultz](#) on Mon, 15 Dec 1997 08:00:00 GMT  
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Joseph B. Gurman wrote:  
[...]

> For some bizarre reason, the Digital UNIX version of IDL 5.0.3 cannot  
> resolve "~<homedirectory>" in findfile --- you have to state explicitly  
> where the home directory lives.

Nope, you can also use expand\_path as I learned a couple of months ago  
:-)

Martin.

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Dr. Martin Schultz  
Department for Earth&Planetary Sciences, Harvard University  
186 Pierce Hall, 29 Oxford St., Cambridge, MA-02138, USA

phone: (617)-496-8318  
fax : (617)-495-4551

e-mail: mgs@io.harvard.edu  
IDL-homepage: <http://www-as.harvard.edu/people/staff/mgs/idl/>  
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