
Subject: Function names (was mean and sdev)
Posted by [Brian Jackel](#) on Tue, 03 Mar 1998 08:00:00 GMT
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Dr. G. Scott Lett wrote:

>
> The MOMENT function is obscure and slow when all you need is
> the mean and standard deviation, so we're adding the more obvious
> MEAN, STDDEV, VARIANCE and other statistics functions for IDL 5.1.
>
> Best wishes,
> Scott Lett

I'm not sure who the "we" above refers to, but I'd like to make a general comment. IMHO IDL is already dangerously cluttered with lots of special purpose functions that could perhaps be more usefully bundled together. In the case of statistics it would be better to have a function like MOMENTS that could return any or all required moments. Even better would be something (perhaps called STATISTICS) that could provide a number of useful quantities. Although the use of square brackets should eliminate the confusion between functions and arrays, the proliferation of built-in functions (especially with common names) may cause problems if the name has been used for existing code.

Does anyone else have an opinion on this subject?

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Brian Jackel
