
Subject: Re: Ohmygod, another round of column/row-major...
Posted by [Steve Scheele](#) on Wed, 03 Mar 1999 08:00:00 GMT
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Since I am new to this news group and missed all the earlier fun on the column/row major debate, I thought I would jump in here.

> The current text (version 5.2) says the *exact* opposite, namely
> that C/Pascal etc. are column-major!!

C does not have true multi-dimensional arrays. It does fake multi-dimensional arrays however by using arrays of pointers to arrays, etc. In that sense 2-dimensional C arrays in row-major order (Ref: Harbison & ASteele, p135).

Fortran is column-major, and IDL was originally written in Fortran. I assume that this is the reason that IDL is column-major. However, since Fortran has no array arithmetic, it seems somewhat irrelevant at this point.

I had never heard of column-major arrays until I encountered it when helping my (then) 12-year old son with new math. It drove me batty then (20 years ago) and it drives me batty now when I try to do matrix arithmetic using IDL. Even my most recent text books use row-major arrays. Every formula I take from the literature must be translated to column-major format.

However, it does appear unlikely that IDL will change to row-major. I think that the only solution is to change the other 99.999% of the world :)
