
Subject: Re: Passing zero as a Parameter/ NOT KEYWORD_SET

Posted by [Vapuser](#) on Wed, 30 Jun 1999 07:00:00 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Martin Schultz <mgs@io.harvard.edu> writes:

> J.D. Smith wrote:

>>

>>

>> That's a bit dangerous. [...]

> Indeed ;-)

>>

>> The best way to proceed is pretend keyword_set() was really

>> named is_defined_and_non_zero(). Forget that it's called

>> keyword_set().

> In fact it is "is_defined_and_uneven" !

HuH?!

```
PRO junk,b=b
  print,keyword_set(b)
END
```

```
IDL> junk
0
```

```
IDL> junk,b=1
1
```

```
IDL> junk,/b
1
```

```
IDL> junk,b=0
0
```

```
IDL> junk,b=2
1
```

```
IDL> print,!version
{ mipseb IRIX unix 5.1.1 Jul 20 1998}
```

What version of IDL are you using?

> Just try to pass var=2 into a routine and print keyword_set(var). Hope,

> David will take notice of this in his article.

>

> Another marginal point about setting default values: I recently learned

> from someone's code (cannot remember whose), to use

> if (n_elements(var) ne 1) then var=default
> instead of
> if (n_elements(var) eq 0) then var=default
>
> The advantage being that you can prevent program crashes when someone
> passes a vector or array in what is supposed to be a scalar.
>

If I require a scalar I always do this...

```
IF n_elements(var) EQ 0 THEN var=default else var=var[0]
```

> And, finally: Use keyword_set when you want to make sure the value of a
> boolean flag is defined:
> flag = keyword_set(flag)
> Then, later in the code, it's just
> if (flag) then ...
> Or value = x+y*(flag), etc. which would crash otherwise.
>

This, in fact, is the only time I use keyword_set. On all other
keywords where values are being passed, I use n_elements() for input
and and arg_present for output.

> Regards,
> Martin.
>
> |||||\\-----// |||||
> Martin Schultz, DEAS, Harvard University, 29 Oxford St., Pierce 109,
> Cambridge, MA 02138 phone (617) 496 8318 fax (617) 495 4551
> e-mail mgs@io.harvard.edu web <http://www-as/people/staff/mgs/>

--

William Daffer: 818-354-0161: vapuser@catspaw.jpl.nasa.gov
