Subject: Re: Passing zero as a Parameter/ NOT KEYWORD_SET
Posted by davidf on Tue, 29 Jun 1999 07:00:00 GMT
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J.D. Smith (jdsmith@astrosun.tn.cornell.edu) writes:

> That's a bit dangerous. IDL may have strange semantics and constructs,
> but that's no reason not to learn them. I recommend peeking at a bit of
> IDL source code available all over the web. You'll find common
> constructs such as:
>
> ; give foo a default value if it is undefined.
> if n_elements(foo) eq 0 then foo=5
> ; perform some action if flag is defined and non-zero
> if keyword_set(flag) then compute_something
> ; return something to the caller if var is available to them (by
> reference)
> if arg_present(var) then var=compute_something_else()

Ah, finally, some sense on this topic! Thanks, JD.

I lost my news feed yesterday and the article I posted on this
topic got eaten by DejaNews (probably fortunately). But nothing
causes more confusion for users than these three totally misnamed
functions: N_Elements, Keyword_Set, and Arg_Present.

I'm in the process of writing an article on the subject for my
web page right this minute. (Why I haven't done it before is
a mystery. It's the single most misunderstood programming
feature I see in my travels.) It will be on my site sometime
this afternoon (Colorado time).

   http://www.dfanning.com/tips/keyword_check.html

Cheers,

David
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