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Subject: Re: Pointers

Posted by [davidf](#) on Mon, 09 Aug 1999 07:00:00 GMT

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Robert Leejoice (rleejoice@aol.com) writes:

> What are pointers used for in IDL. I only precieve that they lead to the new  
> object paradyme. Is this correct? I use structures in most of my programming  
> and pass the complete structure to the appropaite procedures. I suppose I  
> could creat a pointer to a structure, but since IDL passes structures by  
> reference, what is the need?

Pointers are used for all kinds of things, but I think  
the most obvious good use of pointers is in structures.  
(Or objects, which are implemented as named structures.)

Suppose, for example, that you have a field named IMAGE  
in your structure. But the image data that is stored there  
might vary in size and data type. Without pointers, you  
would have to use an anonymous structure and redefine it  
when the image data changed. With pointers, you can continue  
to use a named structure with the IMAGE field a pointer to  
whatever you like:

```
struct = {MYSTRUCT, Image:Ptr_New(image), ...}  
*struct.image = newimage
```

Cheers,

David

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David Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting

Phone: 970-221-0438 E-Mail: [davidf@dfanning.com](mailto:davidf@dfanning.com)

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