Subject: undefined keyword variables
Posted by Mark Fardal on Sat, 30 Oct 1999 07:00:00 GMT

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Hi,

A question: should you always be able to pass undefined variables as keywords to IDL routines?

For example, PLOT is smart enough not to do anything with this undefined variable

```
IDL> plot,x,y,title=donkeykong
[plots fine]
```

but not this one
```
IDL> plot,x,y,clip=pong
% PLOT: Variable is undefined: PONG.
% Execution halted at:  $MAIN$
[no plot produced]
```

```
IDL> help,donkeykong, pong
DONKEYKONG     UNDEFINED = <Undefined>
PONG           UNDEFINED = <Undefined>
```

Should this be considered a bug in plot, or as normal behavior?

In general I don't know why you should be able to safely feed undefined variables to routines and expect them to work. But if you can't, it leads to annoying problems in writing interfaces to any routine with lots of keywords. In my case, I wanted to write a routine that called plot and then oplot, which use different sets of optional keyword parameters. The best solution I know of is to construct a value for the _extra keyword, but it's a pretty convoluted solution.

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