Subject: Re: Accessing "main" level variables
Posted by Craig Markwardt on Tue, 18 Jan 2000 08:00:00 GMT
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Michael Lefsky <lefsky@home.com> writes:

> 2) Is it possible to access main level variables from within a procedure?
> For instance, to solve the problem outlined in 1), you could simply
> write a procedure called "save" which would have precedence over the
> system command save. However, once in the procedure "save", you would no
> longer have access to the main level variables that you want to save.
> Even if you specified them as arguments to "save" you would no longer
> have access to their original (ie. main level) names. There are numerous
> applications for which I would like to be able to somehow get either)
> the names of the variables passed to the current procedure (ie. the
> names they had at the level above them) or to access the main level
> variables. Of course there might be numerous ways to do either of these
> things, from the ugly to the sublime- personally, I am not particular.

I like your questino. I know I will get flamed for saying it, but I think there are some times when it is desireable for a program to deposit its results into the main level. For example, a fully canned curve fitting program may want to return the fitting results. This should of course be done with full control and permission of the user.

"Why," you ask, "don't you just return it as a regular or keyword parameter?"

"Simple," I say. "You don't always know how many variables you are going to return." Also, if it were a curve fitting program "for dummies" then I would want to make it as simple as possible.

Incidentally, there is an internal IDL routine which *can* do this. Unfortunately you need to write a DLM to access it.

Craig

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