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Subject: Re: Can this be done using CALL\_FUNCTION?

Posted by [davidf](#) on Thu, 09 Mar 2000 08:00:00 GMT

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Ed Meinel ([edward.s.meinel@aero.org](mailto:edward.s.meinel@aero.org)) writes:

- > No, I'm not too scared... I usually like to wait one major upgrade
- > before starting to use a new capability. This gives RSI a chance to fix
- > all the bugs that David found ;-)

Well, that's probably good advice. The only trouble with it is that if everyone follows it no bugs are found or fixed. :-(

- > How many of you started using the HANDLE\_\* routines as soon as
- > IDL4 came out?

It is funny how these things evolve. I don't think handles would have happened at all, except that I started to advertise that I could teach people how to use "pointers" in IDL classes. We were using the user value of unrealized base widgets as pointers or handles. I remember being surrounded by a bunch of developers in the hallway once. They had one of my brochures and they were in an ugly mood. "What the hell is this pointer nonsense, Fanning?", they demanded.

"Uh, well, they aren't \*really\* pointers, but look what we can do with them", I said. Next thing I knew we had an unrealized base widget with everything stripped off it except the user value and renamed a "handle". And, of course, since that really didn't do \*exactly\* what we wanted either, we soon had real pointers. (Well, as real as you are likely to get in a language like IDL.)

But I do like the direction the language is evolving in. I just wish they wouldn't make such a big mystery of all the new object graphics capabilities. I just can't figure why they want to hide this light under their bushel basket. I'd be telling the whole world about it. Especially those young pups who think Matlab is the cat's meow.

Cheers,

David

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