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Subject: Re: VARA1, VARB2, VARC8,...

Posted by [Pavel A. Romashkin](#) on Mon, 19 Mar 2001 22:02:39 GMT

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I have had this same question when I went to IDL from Igor Pro, where descriptive variable names are imperative not only for the readability of the code, but even more so for its functionality :-)

I was told by one of the RSI folks that this approach is flawed, if you think about it. Instead, you want to use a structure that is stored in a generic variable, and place a descriptive name in one of the structure's fields:

```
temp = {name: "", data: ptr_new(/allocate)}  
all_variables = replicate(temp, num_variables)  
all_variables[0].name = 'var'+x  
*(all_variables[0].data) = ....
```

instead of

If ('x' eq 'a1') then vara1=..... etc

If ('x' eq 'b2') then varb2=.... etc

which, BTW, will never work, because the string 'x' will never be equal to the string 'a1' anyway.

This way, you don't have to \*find\* how to access variables you dynamically name, when you need to work with them later. All you do then is search the structure.

Cheers,

Pavel

Disclaimer : The above advice may have nothing to do with what the question was about :-)

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