
Subject: Re: array dimensions

Posted by [davidf](#) on Mon, 09 Apr 2001 03:13:23 GMT

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Richard G. French (rfrench@wellesley.edu) writes:

> Now that you mention SMOOTH, one of my pet peeves is that
> `y=SMOOTH(array,n)` gives an error message when `n=1`. There are lots of
> instances where the degree of smoothing is calculated on the fly,
> and one common instance is that you want no smoothing at all - i.e.
> just give me the original array, unsmoothed. I've ended up writing
> my own routine `MYSMOOTH` which is identical to `smooth` except that
> it does not barf when `n=1`. Perhaps this has been changed recently,
> but I don't think so. Does anyone have a good explanation for why
> `n=1` does not have the expected behavior of returning the array
> unsmoothed? Or is there a keyword I have not been noticing that
> can handle this case?

Having had some modest experience these past few years
writing programs for public consumption, allow me to
make an observation or two.

I don't know how it is done in the real world, but
in my world a program idea is generated as a result
of a problem I have encountered (usually more than once)
in my own work. I come up with what I almost always
mistakenly believe is a clever idea and I code it up.

The program stays at this stage for some indeterminate
amount of time, usually until someone runs into a similar
problem and asks a question on the newsgroup. "Oh", I think,
"I have a clever solution to *that* problem. I'll clean
it up for them and offer it on my web page."

In the course of "cleaning it up", I usually discover
that my clever solution is really not as clever as I
thought it was and that it tends to work only in the
narrow confines of its original purpose. So I
make it more general. In fact, I usually try to imagine
all the ways it might be used.

Now, I am known in some circles as having a pretty
fertile imagination, but I have to admit that one of the
things that would *never* occur to me if I was writing
a `SMOOTH` function is that someone would use it if they
didn't want to smooth anything. Are you sure it would
have occurred to you?

Cheers,

David

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