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Subject: Re: Declaration of variables in IDL

Posted by [Todd Clements](#) on Wed, 03 Oct 2001 16:03:44 GMT

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> Does anybody know of making IDL performing an explicit variable check  
> during compilation ?

I don't think there is a way to do this since, as David said, IDL is a weakly typed language.

However, you can get \*some\* type of variable checking during run time by using structures.

```
a = {b: fltarr(10), c: 0L}
```

```
a.b = 5 ;; this works, setting all elements of b to 5
```

```
a.b = 'hi' ;; this DOESN'T work, yielding a type conversion error
```

```
a.b = findgen(7) ;; this does work, yielding 0,1,2,3,4,5,6,0,0,0
```

```
a.c = [2,3] ;; this DOESN'T work since C is a scalar
```

Even though you can get some rudimentary type checking this way, I think it can cause more problems than it is worth since cases like the third one might give unexpected results that you don't detect later. It's much better to embrace the weakly typed variables and reuse the same variable several times in each function. That way, your job prospects are much more secure since you're the only one who can figure out how your code works (my background and training in C programming is coming out now, I think...)

Todd

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