
Subject: Re: CASE statement

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 08 Oct 2001 16:55:12 GMT

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JD Smith (jdsmith@astro.cornell.edu) writes:

```
> The paranoid may therefore use:
>
> if n_elements(key) ne 0 then if keyword_set(key[0]) then do_something
>
> or do you contend that key=[1,0] should also be "false"?
```

Thought I would just comment on this tread, in general.

Those of us who write a lot of IDL programs have had to learn (of necessity, often) to write defensively. For example, I never check a string in a CASE statement without wrapping it in a STRUPCASE call. But, you can either write VERY defensive code, or you can get your work done. :-)

Keyword_Set is surely one of the most abused functions out there, but even using it improperly doesn't cause many problems, most of the time. I'm all for proper programming practice, and I think I do my share to let people know the "right" way to do things (Stein Vidar be dammed) :-). But, folks, the people using these programs are adults. *We* are adults. We know both we and they are going to make mistakes.

When that happens, fix the error and move on. Spending hours anticipating that someone is going to pass an array, of all things, to one of our keywords is wasted work, it seems to me. If it happens once, I'd fix it. If it happened twice. I'd fix it and think about it. But until they pass me three times down the line, I don't give up the center of the court for anything. :-)

Cheers,

David

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