
Subject: Re: IDL Shapefile Object

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 29 Nov 2001 22:31:41 GMT

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I wrote a few minutes ago:

> The problem here is that the shapefile object returns
> a structure that itself has pointers in it. (This is really
> the only way it can be done, because the object doesn't
> really know anything about the actual shapefile you will
> load.)
>
> When this happens, you are responsible for cleaning
> those pointers up yourself.

It has been pointed out to me that there is
a new routine in IDL 5.5 called HEAP_FREE that
is to be used for exactly this purpose. (I think
I overlooked it because it's not in the IDL 5.5 on-line
help, obviously, since the help is in... Oh, never mind.
I have probably beat that horse enough, although I still
think it is an ass-backwards way to release software.)

Anyway, despite the documentation that is meant to
frighten you away from using it (ala Heap_GC), it
is designed to help you clean up in those situations
where you don't know what it is you have been handed.
It will release (clean-up) all the heap variables
referenced by the argument to HEAP_FREE. So, in Kelly's
case, he could have cleaned up by doing something like
this:

```
pEnts = PTR_NEW(/ALLOCATE_HEAP)
*pEnts = oShapefile->GetEntity(/ALL, /ATTRIBUTES)
;
FOR I = N_ELEMENTS(*pEnts)-1, 0, -1 DO BEGIN
  PlotEnt, (*pEnts)[I], color=color
ENDFOR
HEAP_FREE, pEnts
```

Cheers,

David

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