
Subject: Re: Simple questions

Posted by [thompson](#) on Sat, 24 Sep 1994 16:56:25 GMT

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mcook@mksol.dseg.ti.com (mark k cook) writes:

> ... can't
> IDL just take the single element value as the scalar?
> A 1-dim vector should be treated as a scalar. ...

Yes, most of the time IDL doesn't draw a distinction between scalars and arrays with a single element in them. Generally, when you run into trouble is when you try to use it in an IF statement.

The simple workaround is to reference the variable or expression with a (0) to force it to be scalar, e.g.

```
IF (A(0) EQ 3) THEN ...
```

or for an expression, surround it with (and), e.g.

```
IF ( (A*B)(0) EQ 3) THEN ...
```

This works even if the variable or expression is already a scalar.

> The other recurrent problem is an out-of-space (memory)
> problem. How can I clear away any matrices I don't want
> around anymore to free up space?

You can use DELVAR to delete variables, but only at the main level. Within procedures you can clear up the space taken up by a array by redefining it to be a scalar. However, neither of these will help if your problem is with memory fragmentation--see the FAQ for details.

Bill Thompson
