
Subject: Re: Is there no NULL in IDL??

Posted by [btupper](#) on Tue, 21 May 2002 00:36:05 GMT

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On Mon, 20 May 2002 18:42:39 -0400, Wayne Landsman
<landsman@mpb.gsfc.nasa.gov> wrote:

> Sean Raffuse wrote:

>

>> Am I just blind? What can I use for a null value when my data type is

>> integer? Please don't tell me zero.

>

> I can think of 4 options, each of which might be best in particular

> situations:

>

> (1) Use a known "non-physical" value (e.g. -32767) to flag nulls. (But
> be careful when applying numeric operations on the data .)

>

> (2) Convert to floating point and use NAN values to represent nulls.

>

> (3) Carry around an extra byte mask array indicating which pixels are
> null.

>

> (4) Carry around a "null pixel list" vector , i.e. a vector of 1-d
> indices indicating which pixels in the data are null.

>

I wonder if a pointer could be added to this list? It can have a null
value.

```
;define x as a pointer to a null value
```

```
IDL> x = ptr_new(/allocate_heap)
```

```
IDL> help, *x
```

```
<PtrHeapVar1> UNDEFINED = <Undefined>
```

```
IDL> print, n_elements(*x)
```

```
0
```

```
;reassign the pointer to a non-null value
```

```
IDL> *x = 12
```

```
IDL> help, *x
```

```
<PtrHeapVar1> INT = 12
```

```
;reassign the pointer to a null value
```

```
;this is how the UNDEFINE procedure
```

```
;works... www.dfanning.com
```

```
IDL> temp = size(temporary(*x))
```

```
IDL> help, *x
```

```
<PtrHeapVar1> UNDEFINED = <Undefined>
```
