
Subject: Re: About keywords and positional parameters
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 07 Nov 2002 21:15:18 GMT
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JD Smith (jdsmith@as.arizona.edu) writes:

> I agree that you can't tell if a parameter is *meant to be* an input
> parameter, an output parameter, or both without reading the documentation,
> but you certainly can tell whether it is *capable* of passing output:
>
> if arg_present(parameter) then parameter=myungodlyfunction(foo)
>
> ARG_PRESENT() may or many not reveal anything useful, depending on the
> context. Its primary legitimate use is in avoiding calculations of
> optional keyword/argument outputs if the caller didn't ask for them.

I have a feeling this piece of helpful advice is more likely to confuse Mr. Zhang than enlighten him, but please don't get me started on the havoc caused by mis-named functions. Remember, if you want to know if a keyword is *used* or not in your program, you have to follow JD's helpful advice:

```
pro testme, KEY=k
if n_elements(k) ne 0 OR arg_present(k) then $
    print,'You used KEY!' else $
    print,'You neglected KEY!'
end
```

You can find all the nitty-gritty details here:

http://www.dfanning.com/tips/keyword_check.html

Cheers,

David

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