
Subject: Re: How to see if variable is defined?

Posted by [nmw](#) on Thu, 26 Jan 1995 11:18:01 GMT

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In article 95Jan20094331@venice.water.ca.gov, rfinch@water.ca.gov (Ralph Finch) writes:

> Is there a nice way of checking if a variable is defined?

>

> I have a widget_control command which removes a menu, and I need to

> see if the menu is defined before destroying it.

> --

> Ralph Finch 916-653-8268:voice 916-653-6077:fax

> rfinch@dop.water.ca.gov / finger for PGP public key

> "Nada burra la chamaca." A.G.

> Any opinions expressed are my own; they do not represent my employer

There are two possible ways of doing this.

The first is to use the keyword_set function. This returns 1 if a variable is defined, 0 otherwise. Use of this function to test for a variable being defined is not recommended and is bad practice - it is meant to test for the existence of a keyword in a function call, it happens to work.

The proper way is to use the size function. This returns a vector describing the attributes of a variable. Unfortunately it is a variable length vector which can make programming using it quite tedious. However, just to check if a variable is defined is quite simple. The second element of the vector is the data type of the variable, which is zero if the variable is undefined.

Thus, the code

```
IF (SIZE(variable))(1) EQ 0 THEN BEGIN
  PRINT,'Undefined'
ENDIF ELSE BEGIN
  PRINT,'defined'
ENDELSE
```

should tell you what you want to know.

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