
Subject: Re: Proper pointer cleanup question
Posted by [tam](#) on Tue, 08 Apr 2003 18:33:08 GMT
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David Fanning wrote:

> M. Katz (MKatz843@onebox.com) writes:
>
>
>> Thanks! I'll write myself a full reverse-ordered cleanup routine.
>> I suppose this explicit cleanup is just as important for objects as
>> well:
>> Object pointer fields should be explicitly freed in the Cleanup
>> method.
>>
>> Question 1) But what about simple scalar pointers?
>> a = ptr_new(fltarr(10,10))
>>
>> If I set
>> a = 0
>> Will I have stranded my fltarr(), or is IDL smart enough to deallocate
>> it properly?
>
>
> You will have leaking memory. IDL, as a weakly typed
> language, always allows you to write dangerous code. :-)
>

Hi David,

I'm curious why you associate this with IDL's weak typing
(or is it just that that's another avenue for making
mistakes in IDL). Perl would reclaim memory even
though it's also weakly typed.

On a slightly different tack.... Is this situation where
users need to explicitly deallocate memory now something
that is mandated for all future versions? Or could IDL
implement garbage collection in the future?
Garbage collection seems like the kind of detail that languages at
IDL's level should take care of automatically. I hope
RSI doesn't think it's now precluded by considerations
of backwards compatibility. I don't think there's any problem
with explicit deallocations, but I could imagine someone building
programs that depend upon the existence of allocated but
unassociated memory. [Though I can't imagine why!]

Regards,
Tom McGlynn
