
Subject: Re: Pass-By-Reference question.

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 11 Mar 2004 12:40:49 GMT

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Timm Weitkamp writes:

> Here's an observation that makes it even stranger: when you change
> "whaddup.pro" so that NODATA is explicitly set to 0 (instead of one)
> inside the routine, and you then try to override that by calling
>
> IDL> whaddup, nodata=1
>
> The amazing thing is that this way it works (i.e., inherited overrides
> explicit keyword).

I discovered this yesterday when I was playing around with the problem. It reminds me of what happens sometimes when you incorrectly use KEYWORD_SET instead of N_ELEMENTS to determine if a keyword is defined or not, and set a default value. For example, if you use this expression:

```
IF Keyword_Set(mykeyword) THEN mykeyword = 3
```

instead of this expression:

```
IF N_ELEMENTS(mykeyword) EQ 0 THEN mykeyword = 3
```

then it is impossible to set this keyword to 0. I just haven't been able to come up with a specific mechanism for this particular situation. But I *have* seen RSI programmers make this kind of mistake in code, so I think the theory is plausible.

Cheers,

David

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Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>
