
Subject: Re: freeing memory in programs
Posted by [rivers](#) on Thu, 23 Mar 1995 23:06:42 GMT
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In article <3ks2kr\$ioo@dux.dundee.ac.uk>, pjclinch@dux.dundee.ac.uk (Pete Clinch) writes:
>

> I'm writing a Wave Widgets program that uses some big arrays (256 * 256 *
> 128 MRI image stacks). Some operations require temporary arrays to hold
> significant chunks of this, but I don't want these arrays around full
> time to choke the memory. I can't use DLEVAR as I'm not at the main
> program level, so how do I free up memory? If I had assigned an array
> by, say
>
> TmpArr = MAKE_ARRAY(256,256,128, /INT)
>
> would a subsequent use of something like TmpArr = BYTE(0) or
> TmpArr = MAKE_ARRAY(1) free up the memory, or would it still be taken up
> but no longer accessible?
>

I will free it up for re-use inside IDL. IDL does not return the memory to the operating system, i.e. those pages remain in the virtual memory your process is using. If you later allocate another big array inside IDL you will reuse the memory you previously released. HOWEVER, if you know that you will later be needing an array of exactly the same size you are better off NOT freeing up the memory. This is because IDL will fragment the memory you release (allocating small variables, etc.), and when you need it again there won't be a chunk which is big enough. IDL will then have to ask OS for more memory, and eventually you will run out.

Mark Rivers	(312) 702-2279 (office)
CARS	(312) 702-9951 (secretary)
Univ. of Chicago	(312) 702-5454 (FAX)
5640 S. Ellis Ave.	(708) 922-0499 (home)
Chicago, IL 60637	rivers@cars3.uchicago.edu (Internet)
