
Subject: Re: Return UNDEFINED from a function
Posted by [JD Smith](#) on Thu, 12 Oct 2006 17:53:06 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

On Thu, 12 Oct 2006 01:04:44 -0700, Ed Hyer wrote:

>> [quoted text muted]
>
> I fail to see how this "feature" could be used. If you call a function as
> value = FUNCTION(args)
> and FUNCTION() returns an <UNDEFINED>, this will cause an error.
>
> Of course, I'm not using my imagination enough. If you have a procedure,
> and you're not feeling like using any normal error-handling mechanism, you
> can simply define it as a function and execute it using HELP, and use a
> HELP-parsing routine to determine if it ran correctly or not. Is there an
> obfuscated IDL contest?

I think it's a shame IDL doesn't have undef() for creating a real, undefined anonymous variable (you can fake it just by mentioning an undeclared variable). And, analogously, defined() to test if a variable is defined (which reads better than 'n_elements(var) ne 0'). But in any case, you could always have something like:

```
if n_elements(function(args,OTHER=other)) ne 0 then do_something_with,other
```

Not exactly a standard paradigm, but it might come in useful somewhere. In particular, if FUNCTION passes an argument through, and that argument is undefined, it would be nice to keep it undefined.

JD
