
Subject: Re: Yet again, The Sky is Falling!

Posted by [Paul Van Delst\[1\]](#) on Fri, 09 Mar 2007 19:43:11 GMT

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mgalloy@gmail.com wrote:

> On Mar 9, 11:36 am, David Fanning <n...@dfanning.com> wrote:

>> Paul van Delst writes:

>>> But, then it's not an input parameter. It's an output.

>> It generally has to get into the program somehow. :-)

>>

>>> I'm f95-centric, and I know it doesn't apply completely to IDL for a number of reasons,
>>> but I don't think people should new code where the functionality depends on *how* the
>>> arguments are passed (i.e. by value or reference).

>> I'm not saying "pass by reference" is not dangerous, it is,

>> but it is no more dangerous, it seems to me, than a dynamically

>> (and weakly) typed language. Goodness, one of the reasons I LIKE

>> IDL is because you can do all these weird things that would

>> get your knickers in a snit in some other language.

>>

>> Sure, you have to learn a few rules, and usually you learn

>> them the hard way, but you only have to learn them three or

>> four times before they get cemented in your brain. I think

>> it is a small price to pay for a LOT of power.

>

> I agree that pass by reference can be dangerous and very useful. To
> clarify my "moral":

>

> 1. Document clearly which parameters are input, which are output, and

> which are both (i.e. modifying a variable "in place"). Don't change

> the input ones! If you need to have a default value for that input in

> the routine, create a new local variable.

You said it better than I did. What you said above is what I meant.

> 2. Don't pass the same named variable as both an input and output

> parameter in a routine call. (Or as two output parameters!)

Good lord. Why would anyone do *that*? (In any language) :o)

cheers,

paulv

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Paul van Delst Ride lots.

CIMSS @ NOAA/NCEP/EMC

Eddy Merckx
