Subject: Re: Yet again, The Sky is Falling!
Posted by Michael Galloy on Fri, 09 Mar 2007 19:13:55 GMT
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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.

2. Don't pass the same named variable as both an input and output
parameter in a routine call. (Or as two output parameters!)

Mike
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