
Subject: Re: CONTTW.PRO and EXPAND.PRO - some bug fixes, enhancements
Posted by [thompson](#) on Fri, 09 Oct 1992 12:37:00 GMT
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In article <BvuroD.60q@news.larc.nasa.gov>, zawodny@arbd0.larc.nasa.gov (Dr. Joseph M Zawodny) writes...

> I guess to each his own. I do admit that the autoscaling was crude at best.
> I included it, for the same reason PV-WAVE has a point and click interface,
> there are managers out there who still like to play with data that they know
> little about ;-). I will take exception to the alleged "misuse" of
> keyword_set. The only time n_elements is preferable to keyword_set is when the
> keyword needs to allow zero to be a "good" value or when you need to know
> whether the keyword is a scalar or an array. IMHO the first exception is more
> of a bug. Zero should not be considered a sign of a non-set keyword, an unset
> keyword has no value (be nice if the good folks at RSI could follow up on
> this). Just to reiterate the tone of the original posting, I posted it so that
> people could hack it to suit thier needs. I'm happy to see it was of some use
> to someone.

It's not a bug. "Set" keywords take true or false values. In IDL (as in most languages), false values are encoded as zero. Joseph Zawodny is suggesting instituting a whole new data type to do the same thing for keywords.

When passing keywords from higher level routines to lower level routines, it is imperative that there be a value to pass from one routine to the next. Otherwise, how could one do the following

```
PRO DUMMY1,KEY=KEY,...  
...  
DUMMY2,KEY=KEY,...  
...  
END  
  
PRO DUMMY2,KEY=KEY,...  
...  
END
```

In other words, how could you take the value of KEY that was (or was not) passed to DUMMY1 and pass it on to DUMMY2?

Also, you can pass the true/false value of the keyword directly. You don't have to use the /KEY form. You can call

```
DUMMY1,KEY=0,...
```

or

```
DUMMY1,KEY=myvalue,...
```

which is a lot better than

```
IF myvalue THEN DUMMY1,/KEY,... ELSE DUMMY1,...
```

The upshot is, use `KEYWORD_SET` only for keywords that take true/false values, and use `N_ELEMENTS` to test whether a non-T/F keyword was passed or not.

Bill Thompson
