
Subject: Re: Order of argument evaluation (Was: Re: making a checkerboard array?)

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 26 Sep 2007 13:17:35 GMT

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Allan Whiteford writes:

```
> For a more reasonable example am I allowed to do:
>
> plot,(x=findgen(11)),x^2
>
> and rely on the first argument of plot being evaluated before the second
> argument (and the side effect of creating 'x') similarly for creating an
> array and editing in place, e.g.:
>
> IDL> ((a=fltarr(3)))[1]=10
> IDL> print,a
>      0.00000    10.0000    0.00000
>
> Does anyone else do this or just me? I tend to only do things like this
> at the command line and don't embed it in programs out of fear that
> it's going to stop working one day. It also arguably makes the code less
> readable but as a pattern it's probably not that bad. I'd like to know
> what others think.
```

Parentheses have the highest order of precedence, so what is inside them always gets done first. Since what is inside them in these cases is a variable creation, I can't see how you could possibly be breaking any rules, and the construction seems legitimate to me.

That said, I am generally in the business of writing understandable code (as opposed to JD, for example, whose business is to write elegant code), and I can just imagine the number of students and clients who will be left scratching their heads over this kind of syntax. Might as well write the darn thing in LISP to start with!

Cheers,

David

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Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>

Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")
