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Subject: Using cpp with IDL

Posted by [knowles](#) on Wed, 07 Oct 1992 19:51:02 GMT

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Has anyone tried to use the C preprocessor to fix some of the shortcomings of IDL? Here's a few examples of what I have in mind:

Problem: It's difficult to modify common block definitions which must appear in each procedure that references the common block.

Solution: Write one definition in a separate file and then use the `#include` directive.

Problem: Debugging is awkward, debug code must be commented out and manually uncommented.

Solution: conditional compilation with `#ifdef DEBUG` directive.

Problem: There's no way to define symbolic constants or other macros.

Solution: `#define` directive.

Are there better ways within IDL to do these thing?

If you want to try the C preprocessor the command on my machine is:

`"/lib/cpp -P in_file out_file"` and for debug add `"-D DEBUG"` after `-P`

I usually suffix the editable code with `.pre` and the compilable code with `.pro`. I'm also thinking of developing a library of macros to extend the language ala RATFOR. Has anybody else done this?

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