
Subject: Re: Defining system variables

Posted by [sterner](#) on Fri, 09 Aug 1991 21:43:45 GMT

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fireman@stars.gsfc.nasa.gov (Gwyn Fireman) writes:

> I am attempting to create an IDL user environment that uses several
> non-standard system variables. These variables will build upon one another;
> that is, I will define one system variable, then use it to define others.

It sounds like you have a need for global variables. Another technique that gives something like global variables is to use a common. If you keep the common in a separate file, maybe something like XXX_COM.PRO, it may be included in an IDL routine by the statement @XXX_COM (starting in column 1). This common is then included in any routine that needs it, such as an initialization routine that sets default values in the common. One advantage to using commons is that you can test if a variable is defined (if n_elements(x) eq 0 then x is undefined). One disadvantage is that commons may not be extended while in IDL, so when you add something to the common you have to exit and re-enter IDL. This is only a problem during development.

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