
Subject: Re: majority voting

Posted by [Allan Whiteford](#) on Fri, 13 Feb 2009 09:31:22 GMT

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Fiç½LDY Lajos wrote:

>

> On Thu, 12 Feb 2009, JD Smith wrote:

>

>> I'm not sure if this is intentionally or accidentally inconsistent,

>> but it is indeed very useful.

>

>

> It may be useful, but I think $X=X+1$, $X+=1$ and $X++$ should give the same

> result for any X . Most programmers use these interchangeably.

>

Lajos, JD,

I think $X+=1$ should give the same as $X++$ (which they don't). In a vectorised form of $++$ (which most languages don't have) you're saying: "here's a list of things, increment them all by one", it's reasonable to assume that if the same thing is repeated then it will be acted on twice.

$X=X+1$ more means, in my mind, "evaluate $X+1$ and set X to the result of that evaluation" - it's clearer in my mind that everything on the right of the $=$ will happen before the set operation is performed.

I do agree, of course, that this difference could lead to confusion.

The issue is that many languages like C explicitly don't allow you to change the same variable twice on one operation. Languages like Perl positively encourage it. I've never seen a general statement about what IDL can and can't do in this regard. I could argue that `"++x[[0,0,1]]"` doesn't really fall into this category since we're only using one operator.

IDL doesn't have a formal specification like C (the manual doesn't count) nor has anyone ever said (at least that I've heard) that the implementation is the specification (like, say, Perl 5).

I remember the awful day when the result of `"help,({a:[1]}).a"` changed and all my widget based code collapsed in a heap - I live in fear of that day coming again so share your worries. It's possible that someone will look at $++$ and think they can split it across multiple cores - that will be a bad day.

Maybe someone should write to ITTVIS and ask if they intended this as a feature and if they can guarantee that it will remain. I'll do this and report back.

Thanks,

Allan

> regards,
> lajos
>
