
Subject: Re: update variable in structure

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Tue, 16 Jun 2009 16:14:53 GMT

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M. Suklitsch writes:

```
> So far, so good. Now we do exactly the same, but this time the
> variable is embedded in a structure:
> IDL> my_struct = {my_value:8}
> IDL> update_value, my_value
> IDL> help, my_struct, /STRUC
> ** Structure <8220044>, 1 tags, length=2, data length=2, refs=1:
>   MY_VALUE      INT          8
>
> And now the rather simple question: how come this doesn't work?
```

I think you must have meant, why doesn't **this** work:

```
IDL> udate_value, my_struct.my_value
```

And the reason is that structure dereferences, like expressions, array subscripts, etc., etc. (in fact, anything **except** a variable) are passed by **value** and not by **reference**. Things that are passed by value make a copy of themselves and pass that, rather than passing the thing itself.

Cheers,

David

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David Fanning, Ph.D.

Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming (www.dfanning.com)

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