Subject: RE: passing string parameter
Posted by davidf on Sun, 20 Oct 1996 07:00:00 GMT

George McCabe <george@replica.gsfc.nasa.gov> writes:

> I want to write a small help procedure to display brief summaries
> of home made commands.

> IDL> helpme, command_name_string

> Is there a way to pass command_name_string to the procedure helpme
> without quotes?

If I understand this question correctly, I think you want to be able
to say:

    HELPME, myCommand

And have your HELPME procedure interrpret "myCommand" as a string.
I can't think of any way to do this.

But I am sensitive to the problem. Let me suggest an alternative
approach. I define a HELP keyword for all my programs, so that
if I can't remember how to use them, I call them with the HELP
keyword set. If the HELP keyword is set, they print out a short
helpful message about how to use the program and return. Here
is an example of a little program named DOIT:

```
PRO DOIT, data, HELP=help
IF KEYWORD_SET(help) THEN BEGIN
   PRINT, 'DOIT, data'
   RETURN
ENDIF
PLOT, data
END
```

I picked up this little trick from Ray Sterner at Johns Hopkins
Applied Physics Lab, an excellent IDL programmer who always
writes programs that are *fully* documented.

Yours,

David

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