Subject: Re: Negative indexing and the WHERE function in IDL 8.0
Posted by svhhaugan on Fri, 20 Aug 2010 10:36:50 GMT
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On Aug 19, 3:29 pm, wlandsman <wlands...@gmail.com> wrote:

> That won't work for IDL 8.0 users who want to use the negative
> scalar
> indexing, but still need strictarrsubs to give an error when
> subscripting an array with another array with out of bound indices.

Sure, but in IDL 8.0.1 you can *add* another compile_opt statement
that
ensures you get what you want. You can't do that with IDL 7.

> P.S. I go back to the very early days (1986) of IDL when WHERE()
> didn't have the COUNT parameter, and one had to specifically test
> whether the returned index was equal to -1.
>
> index = where(array)
> if index[0] NE -1 then ....

I go back a bit, too. This is still my preferred way of testing.

> but I had never seen before the use of CATCH to make sure WHERE()
> returns a valid value. It seems very convoluted to me, but I suppose
> it makes sense if one expects WHERE() to normally return a valid
> index, and a single CATCH clause can be used for multiple WHERE()
> statements to test for errors. But now those errors won't be
> caught...

Ok, ok, ok, I regret ever putting that catch statement in
there. People get hung up on it and don't see the forest for
all the trees. It was just to prove a point, that people could be
relying on the documented behavior of negative indices
raising errors, when "things just won't work" with a given
set of parameters.

But I also said:

'the catch,error part would most likely be done "with
human intervention"'.

I.e., just letting the program crash while you're fiddling
with it, giving you a nice and friendly command line inside
an emacs window where you can find out what the heck went wrong,
where, and why.

It is, after all, an "Interactive" data language. Not everyone using IDL are *required* to write program suites that work for all possible parameters and situations, so it can be sold to a paying customer. If that was a requirement then IDL would be entirely unsuitable for serious research, IMO.

Cheers,
Stein
