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Subject: Is there a less clunky syntax for retrieving data from an array of hashes?

Posted by [Matt Francis](#) on Thu, 29 Aug 2013 02:44:13 GMT

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I'm (finally) playing around with the 'new' IDL LIST() and HASH() features. I must say I'm fairly un-impressed so far. The syntax is very clunky in the same way the custom object syntax has always been clunky. They look and feel like what they are, bolted on bits to the language with enough effort put in to say 'we have this feature' without actually implementing them in a usable way.

Anyhoo, enough belly aching. Is there a more natural way to do this:

```
> h = hash()
> h['a']=1
> h['b']=2
> harr = replicate(h,10)
```

Now I want to pull out a value:

```
> harr[0]['a']
```

Causes an error

```
> (harr[0])['a']
```

works, but makes for some horribly difficult to read code, particularly if you need to further nest the data structures with more hashes in hashes or arrays. Is there any way to improve this (possibly via compiler flags?).

Note that the same is true if you have a hash of hashes, you still need the fully enclosing brackets, Yuck!

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