
Subject: Re: SPAWN

Posted by [thompson](#) on Wed, 09 Apr 1997 07:00:00 GMT

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Nobuyuki Tasaka <tasaka@mr.med.ge.com> writes:

> Hi all,

> If someone who have tried to compare SPAWN in the following
> usage, please let me know the difference in terms of data
> parsing speed, interface flexibility and routine's independency.

> I would like to use SPAWN for calling database retriving routine
> written in C.

> 1) SPAWN, "cmd", result

> 2) SPAWN, "cmd", /UNIT

This is not a correct usage. The UNIT keyword returns a logical unit number which can be used to communicate with the spawned process using read and write commands (via a bi-directional pipe). Thus, one would want to use this with the syntax:

```
SPAWN, "cmd", UNIT=UNIT
```

When one is done, then one can use

```
FREE_LUN, UNIT
```

to close the logical unit, since the SPAWN did an implicit GET_LUN.

I've never used this myself, but I would guess that the spawned program would communicate with IDL using standard input and output.

Another option you haven't discussed is the use of the /NOSHELL keyword with SPAWN. This is supposed to speed it up.

Bill
