
Subject: Re: SPAWN

Posted by [davidf](#) on Fri, 11 Apr 1997 07:00:00 GMT

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

- > 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

This is the least flexible way of using SPAWN, I think. You can only ask one "question" at a time and then you have the problem of parsing the "result" to get the answer you want.

- > 2) SPAWN, "cmd", /UNIT

This method is much more flexible in terms of interaction with your database, but it is restricted to UNIX platforms. If you want to pass large amounts of data back and forth and can be slow and, of course, you have to make two copies of every piece of data, which is not resource friendly. Call_External would probably be a better choice if you decided to go down this path. It would give you the ability to share memory resources with your database access program.

- > 3) SPAWN, "cmd"
- > (C routine writes data to memory map file and then IDL read it
- > as a Logical Unit File)

This has several huge advantages. First, it is extremely simple to implement. You don't need any special knowledge about operating sytems, linking protocols, etc. And second, it works on every platform IDL supports. You don't have to write special code when you decide to port from your Suns to the PC or Mac. On the downside, if you are transferring large amounts of data it can be slower than you would like.

If you are really serious about doing this, I would look into Call_External as a possibility. Or, perhaps even better, wait for IDL 5 and the new database connection tools. This problem may have already been solved for you! :-)

Cheers!

David

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