
Subject: Re: How to delete a variable

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Fri, 18 Apr 2014 20:24:38 GMT

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wlandsman writes:

> There are times when one wants to delete variables inside a program to save memory. (The intrinsic DELVAR command can only be called at the main level.) For example, the Coyote program UNDEFINE (<http://www.idlcoyote.com/programs/undefine.pro>) tests whether a variable is a pointer, object, structure or ordinary variable, and will apply HEAP_FREE, OBJ_DESTROY, iteration, or set an ordinary variable to 0.

>

> I was using a more elegant but apparently less reliable solution in delvarx.pro

> <http://idlastro.gsfc.nasa.gov/ftp/pro/misc/delvarx.pro>

>

> in which the single statement

>

> Heap_Free, PTR_NEW(x , /No_Copy)

>

> would release the memory and destroy any type of IDL variable x. But I have gotten reports that in some cases this can be terribly slow. Actually the two reports have both been on CentOS Linux systems running IDL 7.0, so perhaps this is a problem fixed in more recent versions of IDL. But can anyone think of a reason why the above statement is not good way to release memory?

Well, HEAP_FREE has to search the entire variable list for heap variables no longer attached to a reference. Perhaps you mean Ptr_Free.

Cheers,

David

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Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.idlcoyote.com/>

Sepore ma de ni thue. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")
