
Subject: VARA1, VARB2, VARC8,...
Posted by [Mark Chan](#) on Fri, 16 Mar 2001 04:02:00 GMT
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Example:

If ('x' eq 'a1') then vara1=..... etc

If ('x' eq 'b2') then varb2=.... etc

I will like to create variable names which is a combination of two separate segments of strings. Is there an easy way to do so?

Thanks,
Mark Chan

Subject: Re: VARA1, VARB2, VARC8,...
Posted by [Pavel A. Romashkin](#) on Mon, 19 Mar 2001 22:02:39 GMT
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I have had this same question when I went to IDL from Igor Pro, where descriptive variable names are imperative not only for the readability of the code, but even more so for its functionality :-)

I was told by one of the RSI folks that this approach is flawed, if you think about it. Instead, you want to use a structure that is stored in a generic variable, and place a descriptive name in one of the structure's fields:

```
temp = {name: "", data: ptr_new(/allocate)}  
all_variables = replicate(temp, num_variables)  
all_variables[0].name = 'var'+x  
*(all_variables[0].data) = ....
```

instead of

If ('x' eq 'a1') then vara1=..... etc

If ('x' eq 'b2') then varb2=.... etc

which, BTW, will never work, because the string 'x' will never be equal to the string 'a1' anyway.

This way, you don't have to *find* how to access variables you

dynamically name, when you need to work with them later. All you do then is search the structure.

Cheers,
Pavel

Disclaimer : The above advice may have nothing to do with what the question was about :-)
