
Subject: string definition question

Posted by [Paul Van Delst\[1\]](#) on Tue, 14 Jan 2003 15:55:24 GMT

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Hello there,

Although I should probably know the answer to this, since all my IDL reference books have been borrowed, hope you don't mind me asking here.

I'm a bit anal about argument checking in IDL. After establishing that the correct number of arguments has been passed using:

```
n_arguments = 1
IF ( N_PARAMS() LT n_arguments ) THEN $
  MESSAGE, 'Invalid number of arguments.', $
  /NONAME, /NOPRINT
```

My standard method for checking string arguments (like filenames to read) is something like:

```
IF ( N_ELEMENTS( FileName ) EQ 0 ) THEN BEGIN
  MESSAGE, 'Input FileName argument not defined!', $
  /NONAME, /NOPRINT
```

```
IF ( STRLEN( FileName ) EQ 0 ) THEN $
  MESSAGE, 'Input FileName argument not defined!', $
  /NONAME, /NOPRINT
```

If I pass a zero-length string, e.g. FileName="", the N_ELEMENTS() test passes so I always test for a non-zero string length (it's happened). If I combine the two tests using AND, then if the variable is undefined, the STRLEN() function generates an errors (since its argument must be defined).

The above works great, but I have always felt that it should be unnecessary. Is there a one-step method to test that the argument is actually defined AND that the string length is not zero? Would the ARG_PRESENT function be useful here somehow? I read the on-line manual, but I really don't grok the text.

Thanks for any info,

paulv

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