
Subject: Empty arrays?

Posted by [Anonymous](#) on Mon, 10 Nov 2008 22:07:46 GMT

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Originally posted by: Demitri

Hello,

I'm starting to dig into IDL programming, and one thing I've found particularly annoying is the lack of support for empty arrays. Although I'm using IDL's OO capabilities, I find that I'm spending a lot of time testing for return results where an empty array would be much more suitable.

If I'm building an array that will have zero or more entries, I create a variable, "insert" a dummy value, go through the code adding entries based on whatever logic, then pop the top dummy value. But even then I have to check that more than one entry is there so I don't throw an error with a

```
return, a[1:*
```

This is very basic functionality. Does anyone have a particularly elegant... well, I'd say solution, but anything is obviously a workaround. I don't want to fight the language, but I get the feeling that IDL's philosophy is "yeah, you do it yourself. I can't be bothered."

Cheers,

Demitri

Subject: Re: Empty arrays?

Posted by [Craig Markwardt](#) on Tue, 11 Nov 2008 18:45:09 GMT

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On Nov 10, 5:07 pm, Demitri wrote:

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>

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> particularly annoying is the lack of support for empty arrays. Although
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> that IDL's philosophy is "yeah, you do it yourself. I can't be
> bothered."

I agree, IDL is sorely missing the concept of an "empty array." In fact it was one of my "Top IDL requests" in the year 2000 :-)

When I need to manage arrays like lists (and deal with all the cases), I tend to use my CMINSERT and CMDELETE functions. They more or less condense the stupid crap-work into an easy-to-read function call. Of course you sacrifice some performance, but I *tried* to make it perform as well as I could.

Craig

Subject: Re: Empty arrays?

Posted by [Anonymous](#) on Tue, 11 Nov 2008 22:41:57 GMT

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Originally posted by: Demitri

> I agree, IDL is sorely missing the concept of an "empty array." In
> fact it was one of my "Top IDL requests" in the year 2000 :-)

I can see they got right on that. :)

Thanks to Craig and Mike for the tips, and more importantly the code saving me from having to do it myself!

Cheers,

Demitri
