
Subject: Re: Question about user input in IDL
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 09 Jul 2009 21:46:21 GMT
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Joanna writes:

```
> Hi! I'm a very, very amateur programmer, much less IDL user... so if
> this question doesn't even make sense, I wouldn't be surprised!
>
> Okay, so I'm writing a code that requires the user to input a string.
> I have this:
>
> x=""
> read,'Enter first type (Example: alpha, beta, gamma): ',x
> print,x
>
> So, when I execute this, and someone chooses alpha, then alpha gets
> printed on the screen. However, within the program, I've read in some
> data using rdfloat,'filename.txt',alpha,beta,gamma. So, really I want
> to define x as alpha which then refers to this column of data, so that
> when it gets to the print,x it actually prints this column of data. I
> don't even know if this is possible, but if there's a way to do it, I
> would be ecstatic!
```

How about something like this:

```
rdfloat, 'filename.txt', alpha, beta, gamma
x = "
read,'Enter first type (Example: alpha, beta, gamma): ',x
CASE StrLowerCase(x) OF
'alpha': Print, alpha
'beta': Print, beta
'gamma': Print, gamma
ELSE: Print, 'I have no idea what you want!!'
ENDCASE
```

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming (www.dfanning.com)
Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

Subject: Re: Question about user input in IDL
Posted by [Joanna](#) on Fri, 10 Jul 2009 18:54:07 GMT
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On Jul 9, 4:46 pm, David Fanning <n...@dfanning.com> wrote:

```
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>   'gamma': Print, gamma
>   ELSE: Print, 'I have no idea what you want!!'
> ENDCASE
>
> Cheers,
>
> David
>
> --
> David Fanning, Ph.D.
> Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming (www.dfanning.com)
> Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")
```

Hi, thanks for the response...I actually figured out a way to make it work using an if loop. I just said if x eq 'alpha' then a=alpha, and then stuck that a into the function I was actually using on the data and it worked. Thanks again!

Subject: Re: Question about user input in IDL
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Fri, 10 Jul 2009 19:28:46 GMT
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Joanna writes:

> Hi, thanks for the response...I actually figured out a way to make it
> work using an if loop. I just said if x eq 'alpha' then a=alpha, and
> then stuck that a into the function I was actually using on the data
> and it worked. Thanks again!

Well, then, here is one of your first programming lessons: There are typically **many** ways to do the job in software. The only trick is to learn how to be either as elegant or as efficient (depends on your personality) as possible. It takes a while. Try to pick good mentors. :-)

Cheers,

David

P.S. To determine if you tend toward "elegance" or "efficiency", try watching a replay of the 2008 Wimbledon tennis final and see if you find yourself rooting for Federer or Nadal. That should give you a pretty good clue.

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.
Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>
Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")
