
Subject: Union in IDL?

Posted by [Guido Lemoine](#) on Mon, 12 Jul 1999 07:00:00 GMT

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Dear All,

Is there a way to convert a bytarr of length N_TYPE to TYPE?

For instance, if TYPE = DOUBLE (so, N_TYPE=8), how do I convert the bytarr(8) to

DOUBLE. I am looking for something like the UNION construction in C (i.e. which

allows you, more or less, to reference a piece of memory as more than one type).

I have been looking at IDL pointers, but can't seem to get that working.

A (fairly stupid)

work-around is to write the bytarr(8) to a binary file (writeu) and then read it again

into a double. But that's not very elegant. Also, I would think it is somewhat bothersome

to write an external C extension to do the union.

Ideally, there would be something like read_bin, BYTARR_VAR, VAR, /TYPE

Any ideas?

Guido Lemoine.

PS. The reason why this is non-trivial is that I am implementing a vector reader with

DataMiner. I am already able to dump ArcView shape files into the data base. The vectors

are written as binary blocks of doubles. If I read the stuff, however, using VectorTable->GetField(n)

I defaultly get a BYTARR with a length equal to the number of doubles*8.

I need to convert

these back to doubles (but double(BYTARR) doesn't work, of course...).
