

Which is better, pass, or not pass by reference?

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Folks,

I've asked this before but never got any response but its important and I thought I'd pitch it again (hopefully a bit clearer)...

One can pass data from one function to another either by passing a copy, or passing by reference.

My understanding of passing by reference (putting the & before a variable during the function declaration) means that the original data is used.

My understanding of **not** passing by reference, (thus passing a copy) literally means creating a copy of the data contained in my variables – thus doubling the memory usage for this data... even if its just a temporary while the function is being executed.

I **believed** (past tense) that one should only pass by reference if they wanted the child function to change the data and pass the newer values back to the parent function.

I'm now thinking that this is just a feature and not the only usage. I am begining to think I should use "pass by reference" nearly all the time in order to conserve memory (since I won't be creating copies of my variable data in memory).

Would this be good practice? Am I right that passing by reference means that my variable data is not duplicated thus using less memory than if I had passed my variable data as a copy?

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All comments + replies please via the newsgroup,
Thanks,
Randell D.

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A: Because it messes up the order in which people normally read text.

Q: Why is top-posting such a bad thing?

A: Top-posting.

Q: What is the most annoying thing on usenet?