DOUBT

LOCAL AND GLOBAL VARIABLES

In the previous example, I assigned values to variables such as subtotal, tax and

taxrate. Variables such as these which begin with a lowercase character are local

variables. This means that they only exist within a specific part of a program – in

other words, they are restricted to a well-defined scope. Here is an example:

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localvar = "hello"

$globalvar = "goodbye"

def amethod

localvar = 10

puts( localvar )

puts( $globalvar )

end

def anotherMethod

localvar = 500

$globalvar = "bonjour"

puts( localvar )

puts( $globalvar )

end

Here there are three local variables called localvar. One is assigned the value,

‚hello world‛ within the ‘main scope’ of the program; two others are assigned

integers within the scope of two separate methods: since each local variable has a

different scope, the assignments have no affect on the other local variables with

the same name in different scopes. You can verify this by calling the methods in

turn:

amethod

anotherMethod

amethod

puts( localvar )

#=> localvar

#=> localvar

#=> localvar

#=> localvar

= 10

= 500

= 10

= “hello”

On the other hand, a global variable – one that begins with the dollar $ character

- has global scope. When an assignment is made to a global variable inside a

method, that affects the value of that variable elsewhere in the program too:

amethod

anotherMethod

amethod

puts( $globalvar

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#=> $globalvar = “goodbye”

#=> $globalvar = “bonjour”

#=> $globalvar = “bonjour”

) #=> $globalvar = “bonjour”