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Subject: Re: droplist items

Posted by [Peter Mason](#) on Thu, 30 Oct 1997 08:00:00 GMT

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On Thu, 30 Oct 1997, Matthew Hanson wrote:

> Does anyone know how I can have a droplist box display filenames that  
> are in a given directory? An openfile dialog is not appropriate because  
> the data files will always be in the same directory and i want it to be  
> a simple interface where the user can choose which file to use. New  
> data files may be added so when the program starts up i want it to check  
> this directory and display the filenames.

On IDL 4 (and IDL 5, I would expect, but haven't really checked thoroughly)...

I use findfile('\*.\*) on Windows platforms and a spawned "ls" command on Unix to get file listings into a STRARR. (The only reason I do things differently for these two platforms is because on Unix, findfile() doesn't indicate whether a name it returns is for a file or directory, while on Windows it has an '\ at the end of each directory name.) I've never looked at how this might work on VMS and Mac platforms.

If the files that your program is to select from have a specific extension (or something like that) then you could use findfile() for both platforms.

Once you've got a STRARR of names, you can update a droplist simply by doing  
WIDGET\_CONTROL,droplist\_id,SET\_VAL=strarr\_of\_names

The only problem with this is that if you have quite a few names your droplist will not fit on the screen (on Unix), and so not all files will be selectable. I have a modified CW\_BSELECTOR routine that is sort of like a droplist, with some additions. (This from the days before IDL had droplists.) It lets you change the names and number of entries, and can be made to put up a scrolling list thing instead of a pop-up set of "menu-buttons", if there are too many entries for the screen. I could send it to you if you like, but I should have you know that it's a really ugly bunch of code.

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