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Subject: A rant: features vs. programming features  
Posted by [gurman](#) on Sat, 01 Nov 1997 08:00:00 GMT  
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I was wondering whether anyone else has the impression that I do of IDL 5: that it makes programming many things easier, and certainly niftier (at least if OOP is your idea of nifty), but it hasn't added much in the way of real functionality.

One area of functionality that I thought was screaming for attention was the production of Web-based material, specifically:

I realize that there are straightforward, free ways to do all of these things --- on some operating systems. But one of IDL's strengths is its cross-platform capabilities.

Other areas that could be addressed include creation of image maps, clicking on any of which returns a pixel value, the straightforward creation of HTML tables from 2-D arrays of data (or structures), ....

I know there's an "IDL on the Web" product in testing, but my impression is that that is quite different (opposite, in some sense): it is meant to make it easier to create Web pages that cause IDL to do things.

Is anyone else interested in the kind of features I've mentioned, or am I totally crazy? I get the impression that almost everyone who uses IDL to display data representations eventually puts some of those representations on the Web, or would like to.

Joe Gurman

P.S. I must be getting to be a real curmudgeon, because I see the creation of Web content as a much more promising area for scientific/technical software than keeping programmers gainfully occupied. Still, both of the people we sent to the recent advanced (read "objects") IDL course came

back thinking of ways they could do several things easier and better, so I shouldn't complain.

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