Subject: Re: when will RSI come out with a scaledDown version of IDL?
Posted by Kelly Dean on Tue, 25 Nov 1997 08:00:00 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

RSI provided me with a student version of IDL to evaluate. I do alot of work with students dealing with satellite meteorology. At first, I disliked the array size limits (256x256) and no support to work with HDF files. We work with satellite image files that are 800x800, even 2560x2560. So the student version of IDL would not be available for image processing, unless you wanted to break the image up into a little pieces - something I didn't want to show the students to do. Also, NASA provides many satellite datasets for free in the HDF format. Many of these files would fall within 256x256 that the student can work with. So, we end up using free software that reads the HDF files or create FORTRAN programs to work with the HDF data for the students class projects. Basically, the student would have no need to use IDL and their was no need to buy the student version.

However, after the student version sat on the shelf for a few months, I had an idea and installed it on my home machine. I wanted to build my own satellite tracking program to help me follow the NOAA polar satellites so I know when one was near to capture the APT signal with my home built weather receiver. To build such a widget application, I need something to display some graphics on a GUI window. The student version works great for building the GUI window with IDL widgets, plus I learn more about the object graphics. Many of Fanning's object graphics programs work with the IDL student version. (He should have a tag indicating the "Student Version Friendly" ones.) I not only learn more about orbital mechanics with my little project, but I also learn more about IDL and how to use it efficiently. Now I am ready to take Fanning's Advance IDL training course.

Kelly

Jason Yutao Li wrote:

> Hi all,
>
> I just took David Fanning's advanced IDL training course (I gave
> it 6 starts on a 5-star scale) and bought a copy of "Advanced IDL
> Programming" manual from RSI. I began to understand widget
> programming, object graphics. Now I am all fired up to do some
> serious IDL programming.
>
> But there is this, again, an age old problem !
>
> One of the selling points of widget programs is 'easy-to-use'.
> Presumably it is not just for the geeks, but for masses. Frankly, a
> full-blown IDL software is not cheap and most people just cannot

> afford it. Then what is the use of writing nice widget programs?
>
> Why can't RSI come up with a scaled-down version of IDL? I was thinking
> maybe the developers who have the full-blown version IDL can save and
> distribute IDL programs in a special format. For those who own a
> scaled-down version of IDL can run the program and produce useful
> outputs, but will not be able to do any development work. It
> shouldn't be that difficult for the smart folks at RSI.
>
> Why not let more people tab into the power of IDL, and RSI can make
> serious money at the same time?
>
> --
>
> ---------- ----------
> Jason Y. Li | Tel : (301) 286-1029
> Climate and Radiation Branch | Fax : (301) 286-1759
> NASA Goddard Space Flight Center | WWW : http://climate.gsfc.nasa.gov
> Greenbelt, MD 20771, USA | Email: jyli@climate.gsfc.nasa.gov
> ---------- ----------
> Beauty of style, harmony, grace and good rhythm depend on simplicity.