
Subject: Re: David Fanning's rubberband box
Posted by [davidf](#) on Thu, 12 Mar 1998 08:00:00 GMT
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Joseph Scott Stuart (nospam@ll.mit.edu) writes:

- > I've recently gotten David Fanning's book, and I like it quite a bit.
- > Good job, David! I am having a problem though with the rubberband box
- > code on page 117. I'm using IDL 5.0.2 on an SGI. When I am finished
- > drawing the rubberband box and release the mouse button, the program
- > does not exit the repeat loop. I have to push another button before it
- > will register that I've released the first button.

I am skiing this week and I...well...forgot to bring a book with me. An oversight I will not soon repeat, even if I have to smuggle it up here in my dirty clothes bag. :-(

I presume you are working with the code that can be found in the rubberbox.pro program. As it happens, this code is designed to act **exactly** as it is acting. That is to say, it is designed NOT to exit the loop until you click some button OTHER than the left mouse button.

The point of the exercise is to show you that you can hold the button down and drag (the way you are using it), or you can simply click different locations in the window and the box is drawn correctly, too. This is a benefit of the Wait keyword to the Cursor command.

I am NOT saying this is the best user interface. In fact, it is probably not. In my programming courses, we sometimes try to make the rubberband box act as you prefer it to. Some programmers can get it to work, but not very many. It involves some pretty convoluted code. (I'm sorry I don't have an example and I doubt I can code it up in the time I have before my wife returns from an errand. Perhaps some of the people who have made it work in my course could offer us an example.)

I introduce the coding exercise in my courses not because I want people to write code like this, but because I want people to work really, really hard to do something that is trivially easy to do with widget programs. After struggling with the rubberband-thing-in-normal-IDL for an hour, most people are highly motivated to learn how to write a widget program. :-)

(For an example of how this is done in a widget program,

see the program ZIMAGE. The advantage of doing this in a widget program is that it is also trivially easy to make the program do something else if you use the right or middle button instead of the left. You simply switch event handlers appropriately. One of my associates is currently working on some code that will do this in a generalized way so that widget programmers don't have to write similar code in each program they write.)

Whoops! I think that is my wife pulling up. I've got to go out in this beautiful Colorado weather and ski. :-)

If you are still struggling next week, contact me and I'll figure something out for you.

Cheers!

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