
Subject: IDL and Snakes!

Posted by [Ronn Kling](#) on Thu, 18 Jun 1998 07:00:00 GMT

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Everyone,

A few weeks ago Erich Sorantin posted a question asking if anyone had written a program in IDL using snakes. Well, I have one now.

Snakes (also called active contours) are a way of determining edges of features in images that conventional techniques fail on. For instance, suppose one wanted to contour the intersection of a bump on a steep hill. A single level will not work since the downhill side of the bump is at a lower level than the uphill side. Snakes will give you this intersection since they find the edge using a combination of point spacing, curvature and gradient information.

If you would like to see this program work I have placed two save files, a sample tiff image, and a help file on [ftp.cis.upenn.edu](ftp://ftp.cis.upenn.edu) in the incoming directory. Just log in using anonymous and download either `snake_50.sav` (if you are using IDL 5.0) or `snake_51.sav` (for 5.1). Make sure you are in binary mode for these and the `square.tif` file. Finally, download the `snakehelp.txt` for details on running the program. Restore the save files and then type `snakedemo` at the prompt and the program will begin.

If anyone is interested in getting the source code for these please email me at the address below and I will get it to you.

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