
Subject: Re: several quick questions

Posted by [Liam Gumley](#) on Fri, 23 Oct 1998 07:00:00 GMT

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philip aldis wrote:

- > -Is the best way to find out the number of lines in a file without actually reading
- > the file to spawn a unix command, if so what command? Or is there a way of doing it
- > from within IDL. I'd prefer not to read the file because some of the files are very
- > large. (I've already got a copy of DDRead, and the nlines program is fine but if
- > the file is very long then it takes time)

David Fanning has some excellent advice at

http://www.dfanning.com/tips/unknown_rows.html

- > -I'm writing a visualisation program for displaying some ray tracing data. A C
- > program that has already been written translates ray path histories for an engine
- > duct and translates them onto a flattened version of the duct, so a 2-d appreciation
- > of where the rays are in real-time can be obtained. I have to animate these images.
- > I could build my widget program using the cw_animate widgets but they direct output
- > to their own window. The problem is that I want to display the animation inside a
- > frame of the duct with some drawings, and a second animation of the end plate of the
- > duct and a drawing of the duct. So, can you direct output from cw_animate into
- > specific parts of draw widgets. Or would it be best just to do the pixmaps myself?

I've written some routines which allow animation without using
cw_animate. Check out

<http://cimss.ssec.wisc.edu/~gumley/frame.html>

- > -I am still not sure about how much functionality one can put into event handlers. I
- > realise that if I put too much then the program will not be spending enough time in
- > the event loop then the users will be clicking buttons thinking the programs crashed
- > which will then send xmanager haywire. But, if we take the example of loading in
- > data - is it best to get all the data parameters then call an object method which
- > loads data into self. However while all this is going on, the user could be clicking
- > buttons and causing problems. Again, if I was doing an object method to load the
- > data into pixmaps ready for an animation, this is also going to take a little bit of
- > time, and the user could cause problems. If I have to stop the user from mucking
- > around what are some good ways of telling the user that a process is going on.

Check out the help for the WIDGET_CONTROL keywords HOURGLASS and SENSITIVE.

If an operation takes any more than a fraction (say 1/10) of a second,
you should use these keywords to desensitize all widgets and display an
hourglass, e.g.

;- User requests that data be read, so desensitize widgets and display
hourglass

WIDGET_CONTROL, EVENT.TOP, HOURGLASS=1, SENSITIVE=0

```
;- Read the data  
RESULT = READ_MY_DATA( FILENAME )
```

```
;- Read is done, so sensitize widgets and turn off hourglass  
WIDGET_CONTROL, EVENT.TOP, HOURGLASS=0, SENSITIVE=1
```

Of course if your operation takes more than, say, 20-30 seconds, you may want to look into running the operation in the background using the WIDGET_CONTROL keyword TIMER.

Cheers,
Liam.

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