
Subject: Re: RSI's Priorities (was: GUI Builder...)

Posted by [Martin Schultz](#) on Sat, 14 Nov 1998 08:00:00 GMT

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David Fanning wrote:

> Brian Jackel (jackel@danlon.physics.uwo.ca) writes:

>

> [...]

>>

>> New bells and whistles at \$1500 a pop or

>> Freeze development and deliver an ``IDL Classic" at

>> \$500 per head.

>

> Objects have absolutely revolutionized the way I write

> programs. I think they will have as big an effect on me

> as widgets did when they were first introduced. I don't

> think I've written a program for pay in the last six

> months that didn't have at least one object in it. And

> I especially like them with direct graphics. They are

> fast, they print nicely, and they are unbelievably

> powerful.

>

> Could I do the same thing without objects? Probably, if

> I were clever enough. But objects just make it so darn

> easy. :-)

>

> I cast my vote more more bells and whistles like this

> one!

>

> Cheers,

>

> David

>

> -----

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I claim that this newsgroup is biased !! Sure enough, personally

I rather take it as my own fault that I have *not* been using objects in

IDL yet -- there are just always so many things that have to be finished

on time that I never get around learning about them (in fact, I haven't

even fully digested all the information that David gives on widget

programming in his book yet ... sigh ... if I only had time to improve

my EXPLORE program ... end sigh). But: e.g. in our research group there

about 10 people using IDL, and 1.5 of them participate in or even read this newsgroup. Most others (and I would say that's probably typical for scientists) have some basic knowledge in programming (sure, FORTRAN (=f77) mostly), but not much beyond that. They are quite happy if they can use e.g. a readdata.pro to retrieve some ASCII data from a file, and they rejoice when they learn about the where function. Most programs written in our groups start out as 5-20 lines of code, hand-tailored for one specific plot. And most programs stay that way, too. I am already happy if my colleagues make use of some of the library routines that I have written or gathered from various sources, but if I were ever to tell them: "Here's this perfectly handy and powerful routine, and it's even object-oriented!" they would just thank me very politely but never speak to me again ;-) There once was a german chancellor who said "Entscheidend ist, was hinten rauskommt" (free translation: "it's the plot, stupid! [not the program]"), and he sure was right on this one.

But if David ever writes another book on object oriented IDL programming techniques, I may well become one of his customers!

Best regards,
Martin

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