
Subject: Re: PV-Wave/IDL Style Guide -- Does one exist?
Posted by [rmlongfield](#) on Thu, 31 Dec 1998 08:00:00 GMT
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In article <01be3403\$59a9d080\$490110ac@Shawn-pc.integ.com>,
"Shawn Scoles" <shawn@integ.com> wrote:

> Is there a web site which may have a style guide we could use to base our
> own style guide on? Or would someone be kind enough to E-Mail me
> (shawn@integ.com) a style guide they use? It would be of great help to us.
> Thank you.
>
> Signed,
> Shawn Scoles
> Integral Systems, Inc
> shawn@integ.com

Hi Shawn,

There are lots of Web pages with references to IDL which I have been collecting over the past year from this newsgroup. They vary from just a few programs to a complete IDL devoted web site. I list here two of them which I visit frequently.

<http://www.dfanning.com/index.html>
<http://fermi.jhuapl.edu/s1r/idl/idl.html>

Just a short example of my experience with bad programming style, I had to help someone at work who had started learning IDL from scratch and had written a long program. I wanted to use a widget to simply call this program and allow some input, the simplest kind of widget programming one can think of. The first problem I encountered was that I could not find the statement where I could add a keyword for input. It turns out that it was somewhere in the middle of the program. There was no 'PRO program_name' line! It wasn't REALLY necessary since the program was working fine without it. (I think because IDL can run from the command line which doesn't need a PRO line). However, for readability and adding this keyword, we gave it a PRO statement.

I've been trying to use modular programming where separate tasks are put in separate programs, each with a PRO or FUNCTION heading. One advantage is that this often allows one to use programs which are already written and available on the net. It also leads to easier to read programs (well, sometimes...)

I also recommend getting a copy of David Fanning's book. It's not only the only book around concerning IDL, it is a good book.

Good Luck!

Rose

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