Subject: Re: General purpose structure editor?
Posted by Martin Schultz on Mon, 08 Mar 1999 08:00:00 GMT
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David Fanning wrote:
>
> MIchael Asten (MichaelAsten@Flagstaff-GeoConsultants.com.au) writes:
>
>> I agree with your grumps re idl 5.x XVAREDIT as being non-intuituive. I
>> actually logged a bug report with rsi when I first tried it, and found it
>> " didnt work"; silly me I didnt think of double clicking etc etc.
> [...]

There seems to be another bug in XVAREDIT (at least for IDL 5.1): I have
a structure
IDL> help,minfo,/stru
** Structure CTMMT, 11 tags, length=48:
   NAME   STRING   'GEOS1'
   FAMILY   STRING   'GEOS'
   ONLINE   INT   0
   NLAYERS   INT   20
   NTROP   INT   14
   PTOP   FLOAT   10.0000
   PSURF   FLOAT   986.000
   RESOLUTION   FLOAT   Array[2]
   HALFPOLAR   INT   1
   CENTER180   INT   1
   FULLCHEM   INT   1

and if I call XVAREDIT,minfo I get all the fields in the structure, but
at the end a thousand (well, almost;-) repetitions of the var.FAMILY
entry. And, David, you are absolutely right about your opinion on the
table widget - except that I do find it useful for simple display
purposes when you don't want anyone to mess around with the data you are
showing.

Martin.

> You are not alone. RSI themselves couldn't figure it out
> when they wrote the ASCII_TEMPLATE program.
This sounds almost like some other company in Wash.?

> I'm sure I've mentioned that I LOVE
> IDL at least a couple of times in the past week.
Just this past week, I had to admit to a colleague several times that
IDL does have some limitations and some strange behaviour. Of course,
for David it is nice that people have to know about IDL's idiosyncrazies

but for many others it often means unnecessary frustration. Below three of the major complaints that I heard last week:

* logarithmic plots: why isn't there an easier way to plot "sensible" labels except using xyouts? Since the [XYZ]TICKS keyword doesn't make too much sense in a log plot anyway, one possibility could be to redefine it as follows:

ticks = 0 : default, labeling only at decades
1 : labels at 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, ...
2 : labels at 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,...
and even(?) 3 : labels at 1, 1.2, 1.5, 2., 2.2, 2.5, 3, ...

I bet there are thousands of IDL users who have been frustrated about this missing feature at least once!

* map_set etc.: for the default projection, if you use limits=[..] you need to make sure that your lon0 parameter lies within your range. But don't touch lat0 ! This is one of those unexpected side effects that may take a while to figure out for not so experienced users.

* colors: for users who want to use IDL simply to do their data analysis and who produce mostly line plots, it would certainly be helpful to have predefined drawing colors as default (instead of or in addition to) the grey scale color table which first has to be overwritten (and this seems to be a running themke on this newsgroup too). Best would be to have a standard set of named colors so that you could write plot,color=black and it would work no matter whether you have < 256 colors or 16M. This shouldn't be hard to implement for true color systems, and for color table users, one could perhaps reserve a few entries for these drawing colors as default and leave them intact if someone issues a loadct, except if he/she explicitely sets bottom to zero.

Also, plot, color=red should as default plot only the data in red but use a "systemwide" default color for the axis. Don't ask how many times I wrote

```
plot,dummy,/nodata,...
oplot,data,color=red,...
```

But, yes, even I love IDL - otherwise I wouldn't spend so much time trying to solve my colleagues' problems and reading and writing on this newsgroup.

Martin.

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