
Subject: IDL date-time routine complaint

Posted by [Mark Hadfield](#) on Thu, 29 Jul 1999 07:00:00 GMT

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In IDL 5.1, RSI introduced a new set of routines for date & time handling. They were based on the new IDLDT structure. See the "What's New in IDL 5.1" book, p 27. Novelty junkies like me saw them as a welcome overhaul of an area in which IDL had been rather poor, and based our own code on them.

In IDL 5.2, these routines were shifted to the "lib/compat" subdirectory. The README file for this directory says "This directory contains code for IDL routines that provide compatibility with other software." Compatible with what for heaven's sake!? I can't see any mention of this in "What's New in IDL 5.2".

In IDL 5.2.1 they have been deleted! See <http://www.rsinc.com/idl/relnotes.txt>

According to RSI's Y2K summary (<http://www.rsinc.com/products/Year2000.cfm>) one of these routines, STR_TO_DT, didn't work properly when fed 2-digit dates. So they threw away the lot. Is this a world record: from brand new to "retained for compatibility" to deleted entirely in 1.5 years & 3 minor versions?

I am gobsmacked by the cumulative stupidity of the whole business. I don't know whether to get angrier at the programmer who wrote non-Y2K compliant code in 1997 or the product manager who decided to desert the users in 1999.

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