
Subject: Re: Plea for IDL 2000 (was: a plea for more reliable mathematical routines)
Posted by [Craig Markwardt](#) on Sat, 18 Sep 1999 07:00:00 GMT

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davidf@dfanning.com (David Fanning) writes:

- > What I don't understand is the heat behind these
- > feelings that IDL is a big hack. Heck, go use something
- > else if you feel that way. It's a competitive marketplace
- > that IDL lives in and you are free to buy (or build)
- > anything that does the job for you. IDL only exists because
- > *somebody* keeps buying it.

Hi David--

I love IDL. It's got a wonderfully expressive language, powerful vectorizable operators, and mountains of library software (my own, and from others). As an interactive analysis language it has profoundly changed how I work (for the better). I have made software the beats the socks off its C/FORTRAN equivalents.

I could hate IDL. It's got a quirky language with objects tacked on. I have made a large investment in mountains of software that won't run on any other system. IDL is not very friendly to the programmer/maintainer and has introduced and obsoleted several language features over the course of a year or less. Software bugs persist through several versions. When a bug appears we have no recourse in fixing it, since we don't have the core IDL source code. For example, witness the arguments about mathematical functions. I have spent a profound amount of my time working around IDL bugs. Making a simple hardcopy in direct graphics is a serious inconvenience.

Love/Hate, that's what it is!

Craig

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