Subject: Re: Plea for IDL 2000 (was: a plea for more reliable mathematical routines)
Posted by davidf on Fri, 17 Sep 1999 07:00:00 GMT
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Greg (ushomirs@my-deja.com) writes:

> yeah..   IDL started out as a big hack, so I could understand some of
> these inconsistensies in the original version. But still developing it
> as a hack after 16 years? c'mon!

"A big hack" is one way to describe a program that
started out of solve some interesting scientific
problems, but I doubt it is the most helpful way
to think about it. Did David Stern have *this* IDL
in mind when he started out 16 years ago? I doubt it.
He was just trying to make something useful for his
colleagues and create a job for himself. I know
David personally and I am pretty sure that is *still*
his motivation. And after all, it's not like he has
a ton of shareholders he has to please. RSI is
privately owned and David can do whatever he likes,
including chuck it all and move to Cancun.

You can say whatever you like about IDL, but I
can assure you there are LOTS of people who find
it useful. And there are probably more of us than
you like to think who wouldn't think of programming
in anything else. By that standard IDL has been
amazingly successful.

I can think of several software products that do
specific tasks better than IDL, but I can't think of
one that does the range of things IDL can do any better
than IDL can do them.

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.

The only explanation I can come up with for the strong
animosity is that that "somebody" is your boss, who
purchased IDL against your recommendation. But, hey, it's
a programmer's market out there. You can always get a new
boss. :-)

Cheers,

David

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David Fanning, Ph.D.
Fanning Software Consulting
Phone: 970-221-0438 E-Mail: davidf@dfanning.com
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: http://www.dfanning.com/
Toll-Free IDL Book Orders: 1-888-461-0155