
Subject: Re: Top 10 IDL Requests

Posted by [Michael Asten](#) on Fri, 21 Jul 2000 07:00:00 GMT

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My top few requests:

1) Try harder to keep backward compatibility when releasing new versions, eg how silly when the TODAY function disappeared on transition from idl5.2 to 5.3 (problem with y2k compliance apparently).

2) Add more features to smooth the development path for the non-professional programmer (ie the scientific user).
Examples would be to add a hardcopy print button (instead of burying the info on your website), introduce more canned
guis (dialog_message and dialog_pickfile are great - why not a few standard guis to

a) create a plot window on a widget,
b) to provide a template of labelled fields for input/editting of parameters (a userfriendly cleanup of xvaredit)
(see thread on IDL-pvwave newsgroup)
c) a thermometer gui to show progress during a slow looping task

3) a gui to take " standard output" so that info normally sent to the log window can be displayed when the logwindow is absent (eg when a program is run under runtime licence).

4) I'll add a vote for plot colors accessible by name.

5) a check at compile time for multiple routines of the same name (programmer error creating routines of same name but different function, is unchecked at present, but obviously causes unpredictable results).

6) check on validity of loop indices, eg
for i=0,10,0

will hang idl on a PC, so that only control-alt-delete can stop it. If the indices are computed in error (eg with roundoff or wrong sign) then location of the error is difficult since the infinite loop prevents any break from the keyboard on a single threaded system.

Given that rsi may not want to make loop execution any slower, this option could perhaps be a compile-time option for desperate debug purposes only.

Regards,
Michael Asten
