Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 Stability

Posted by Liam E. Gumley on Fri, 10 Nov 2000 08:00:00 GMT

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Med Bennett wrote:

- > Well, I'm still using 5.0.2, circa mid 1997. It's hard to know what the
- > "best" version for one's particular feature needs and stability is. Maybe we
- > should have a vote as to what the best version of IDL is, taking into account
- > both features and stability. Since I haven't (I hate to admit it) gotten into
- > object graphics yet, I don't consider that functionality to be important
- > right now.

My experience with writing IMDISP

(http://cimss.ssec.wisc.edu/~gumley/imdisp.html) taught me it can be frustrating when you try to support multiple versions of IDL (IMDISP supports IDL 5.0-5.4). Little things keep creeping in which make it harder to write version-independent code. For example, the SIZE function keywords n_dimensions, dimensions, type, tname, and n_elements introduced in IDL 5.2 make it much easier to determine array information. Decomposed color handling is also much improved in IDL 5.2, as is the PRINTER device support. Also, once I made the switch to square-bracket array syntax, I could never go back to the pre-5.0 parentheses.

For my work-related programming, which is mostly done on UNIX boxes, I use IDL 5.3 routinely and find it to be reliable, stable, and worry-free. The transition from IDL 5.1 to 5.2 to 5.3 over the last few years was painless AFAIK for all IDL users on these systems. I have installed IDL 5.4 on a couple of NT PCs and it works fine, but we need to decide how to handle GIF images before we can upgrade our UNIX systems to 5.4.

Cheers, Liam.

http://cimss.ssec.wisc.edu/~gumley