Subject: Re: Response to question about PV-WAVE and IDL
Posted by sterner on Thu, 21 Feb 1991 21:13:02 GMT

eckman@asdsun.larc.nasa.gov (Richard Eckman) writes:

> While I can't comment directly on the technical differences between IDL
> and PV-Wave, I have been using IDL for over 10 years and have used a demo
> copy of PV-Wave. I still remember the days when !HIVOLT was a system
> variable back on the PDPs! My impression is that there's minimal difference.
> It's clear that the Precision Visual folks do have some new features but these
> appear to be related primarily to support new graphics devices (e.g., TEK
> 4100).
> The beauty of IDL for the scientific researcher is the ability to use it
> as a programming language. It's far more than just a plotting package.
> While point and click interfaces might be great for managerial types,
> it seems to defeat the whole purpose of the package. Admittedly,
> I haven't tried the new PV-Wave point and click front end, but that's my
> initial impression.

I agree. I've been using IDL for about 7 years and have pretty much
abandoned other languages. I enjoy it when people come to me and say
"but IDL can't do that" and I show them how to do it. I've always had
excellent response from the IDL people, no problem getting help.
I don't know much about PV-WAVE except that it is based on IDL and as
a language is very much the same. As far as point and click, I've
been writing such programs in IDL for awhile using the wmenu function.
This probably isn't the feature that PV-WAVE means, but it works just
fine. This feature will be much improved in future releases of IDL
I'm told. What amazes me most about IDL (and PV-Wave) is that anyone
would still use FORTRAN or similar languages.

Ray Sterner   sterner%str.decnet@warper.jhuapl.edu
Johns Hopkins University   North latitude 39.16 degrees.
Applied Physics Laboratory   West longitude 76.90 degrees.
Laurel, MD 20723-6099