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Subject: Re: IDL compatibility

Posted by [Martin Schultz](#) on Thu, 11 Jan 2001 11:02:15 GMT

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Craig Markwardt wrote:

>  
>  
> In my case I eventually found my own error. I misconfigured the  
> !PATH, so lib/obsolete wasn't included. Thankfully STR\_SEP is still  
> there, for now.  
>  
> However, here's what I think should happen. This is me tickling the  
> RSI secret agents who read this newsgroup. :-) See if people agree:  
>  
> \* when replacing one routine with another (as in the case of STR\_SEP  
> and STRSPLIT), leave STR\_SEP.PRO as a wrapper routine. Then at  
> least people's programs won't break. So far this is not an issue  
> since STR\_SEP is still included in the "obsolete" directory.

Well, I think this is what the obsolete directory is there for! So I  
don't see a need to have a wrapper here. The only thing that bothers  
here is (as JD recently pointed out): you normally get the obsolete  
directory in your library search path *before* the up-to-date library  
(because subdirectories are included first). Maybe, therefore, the  
obsolete directory should be on the same level as lib ?

>  
> \* when adding undocumented built-in functions, as for STRTOK, the  
> function name should really have a unique prefix, like "RSI\_". This  
> avoids name clashes with innocent user routines.

I certainly agree on this (despite the warning that RSI folks give in  
that *\*you\** should precede all your programs with your initials. With  
undocumented internal functions, this is really something different.

>  
> And generally, I would advise RSI that they should only break  
> functional IDL code if:  
>  
> \* it fixes a serious bug (would people classify the Y2K problem in the  
> date routines as a serious bug? I'm not sure I do), or;  
Certainly

>  
> \* in IDL 6.

Well, if you include the obsolete directory to your search path, your  
code should still work. And I think the RSI folks are already doing a  
tremendous job in terms of backward compatibility. In fact, sometimes  
I wish they could go much more overboard and throw away some of this

old ballast that has piled up in IDL over the years. Maybe version 6 could really be a good point to say:

"Hey folks, here it is. We've cleaned the thing up, so now it's your turn (to clean up your code). If you don't want to pay for that cleaning woman, then please stick to version 5.<last> . We are sure you can do tremendous work with this version already." ;-)

Cheers,  
Martin

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