Subject: Re: IDL vs. matlab
Posted by Aaron Birenboim on Thu, 12 Apr 2001 20:18:54 GMT

Bruno <bruno_dubois@hotmail.com> wrote:
: Just want to get the group's opinion regarding this. I am an undergrad and I
: am thinking about buying IDL or MATLAB (student version). Most of my friends
: are advising for the latter software product since it's apparently more
: powerful and widely available on university systems. What do you think?

Depends on the discipline. What do your peers in the field
use?   I'm an EE. MatLab is the most common. Especially
for the controls folks who like simulink. Some of the DSP guys
are gravitating toward MatLAb too.

Much of the Image processing (Especially Hyperspectral) community
and Physicists seem to be using IDL.

It depends on what you want. MatLab was slow to get basic
programming constructs into its language (like structs...)
IDL has been strong here. Does MatLab allows arrays
of greater dimension than 2? If so, its a recent development.
Hence the historical prefrence for IDL with video processors.

Also... MatLab used to re-interpret routines every time they
are run. Have they gone to a pre-compiled or VM-like solution
like IDL yet? Without this ability, lots of MatLab stuff
could run VERY SLOWLY, as it re-interprets subroutines
millions of times in a loop.

As it stands, I think IDL is more expensive... but it bundles
many things that cost more on MatLab. It starts with
some numerical recipies routines i think, it has the
ability to call C (without a $900 extension last time I checked
MatLab)

Frankly, as a student, I'd give some pretty serious consideration
to ANA. Its an minimal-functionality IDL-like OPen source
project. I'd like to see it take off, so I can stop messing
with IDL.   Last I checked there, it needed a good
LINKNLOAD/CALL_EXTERNAL function so that people could more
easily start attaching modules for extended functions...
like complex numerical methods and GUI's.

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Aaron Birenboim
Albuquerque, NM
aaron@boim.com

http://boim.com/~aaron