Subject: Re: Duplicate module names. Was: Object epiphany: ...
Posted by Martin Schultz on Fri, 20 Apr 2001 11:54:42 GMT
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JD Smith wrote:
>
> Maybe I'll install all the libraries I can find, do a global shadow
> listing, and post it somewhere for all to see.
>

As a start, you could take a look at my web pages
(http://www.mpimet.mpg.de/~schultz.martin/idl/html/allalpha.h tml)
where you can find routines of 11 popular libraries all listed in
alphabetical order; so a name space conflict is very easy to detect
;-)

In fact, this web page of mine is one argument that I have to
conceive in favor of not using a authorname prefix for routines,
because ... guess what you will see when you sort all such routines by
alphabet ;-) Then again, for a hierarchy of objects belonging to the
same "tree", this would probably be a desired effect, so that you see
all of them listed together. ... Then again: if *everyone* would use a
3-letter prefix to his/her routines, one could easily strip these off
and sort by the rest of the name which should then be meaningful, of
course.

Overall, there seems to be a legacy problem (as with IDL itself),
and I don't see a chance that everyone (especially the maintainers of
the huge libraries like JHU or Astro, or David) will go through all
those routines and (a) rename them, (b) change all routine calls to
the new names ... - unless someone provides a perl script to do this
automatically ;-).

The *real* problems, of course, are (1) that the RSI library is
insufficient (e.g. a missing colorbar routine), (2) that the RSI
library can never be sufficient because different people need
different routines, (3) that there are no clear rules and naming
conventions for software development in IDL, (4) that routines that
are made publically available are often written by "amateurs" who want
to get something done, do it in a more general way and think that
others may find that useful, (5) the availability of the web as such.
In the old days, you just never knew about routines someone in New
Zealand wrote, so you would do it yourself anyhow.

Now, with IDL objects, we may be in a somewhat more fortunate
situation, because there just aren't that many yet (at least not in
the public space). I would really love to see more discussion about
how to design object class hierarchies and perhaps even a consensus

agreement (a manifest) about object programming and documentation(!) style. If this could find its way into all major libraries and new program developments, we could see a great leap in efficiency and code-reusability in a few years from now. Wouldn't it be nice if RSI could sponsor a meeting where interested people would meet to discuss these things? It might well help them improve their product and leverage off the efforts of their customers, and it would give us an opportunity to finally meet some of the people we only know by email address. Forget about this next road show, David, and call in the first real-life EPA congress ;-)

Cheerful regards,

Martin

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