
Subject: Windows input focus question

Posted by [Rick Towler](#) on Wed, 26 Sep 2001 00:07:47 GMT

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I am writing a dlm to provide improved keyboard, mouse and gameport input for windows based IDL applications. The mouse and joystick part is pretty much done, but I have run into a problem getting keyboard input.

The problem is that IDLDE steals the input focus when you hit most keys. The dlm routine to return the state of individual keys works (I am using `GetAsyncKeyState()`) but the IDL application loses focus and the key character shows up either on the IDLDE command line or in the IDLDE editor. Forcing focus to the application only causes the application and IDLDE to battle for focus when keys are pressed flashing the two windows generally causing a mess.

I guess this really is a windows programming issue: Is there a way to prevent IDLDE from taking focus when the user hits a key? It may be impossible but I would like keyboard focus to be on the IDL application only.

One thought was to write something that would work below IDL and intercept keys before IDLDE ever sees them but *simple* routines to do this went out long ago as my modern compiler laughs at me if I try to include `<bios.h>`. This wouldn't be optimal anyway since it would pick up ALL keystrokes.

I have tried unsetting `NO_BLOCK` on my test application in the hopes that this would inhibit IDLDE from receiving input at the command line but it doesn't. You may not be able to execute anything on the command line but you certainly can fill up the buffer.

I have tried "polling" the keyboard using the `IDL_GetKbrd(0)` function but this obtains input from the IDL command line which isn't always available (for example if IDLDE is minimized) so this approach isn't satisfactory.

Previously I have used the hidden text widget approach to obtain keystrokes but the whole point of this dlm was to replace this common IDL hack at least on windows machines.

I am close to giving up on the keyboard input routines but wanted to see if anyone has had any experience with IDL and the windows API and could possibly renew my hope that this can be done.

-Rick
