
Subject: Re: Sacrilegious but genuine question
Posted by [Francis Burton](#) on Thu, 10 Jan 2002 18:46:53 GMT
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David Fanning wrote:

>
> James Kuyper (kuyper@gsfc.nasa.gov) writes:
>
>> Basically, what he'd like is a program someone else has already written
>> and debugged, that does what he'd like to do. That's not an unreasonable
>> desire.
>
> I don't disagree with this sentiment at all. I just think
> it is a questionable proposition when you purchase
> a programming *language*, whose purpose is to *build*
> things of this sort.
>
> There are plenty of canned analysis software packages
> (ENVI is one). If they do what you want to do, you buy
> one. If they don't, you pretty much have to roll your own.
> I think that is more or less still the nature of science, although
> it's true that I have been out of school for a long time now. :-)

Actually, what I would like most of all is software that makes it possible for me (or someone else) to write analysis programs for people who either don't program at all or who would be able to write a dozen or so lines of FORTRAN- or BASIC-like code to say what they want to do with their data (i.e. simple scripting).

Conventional programming languages are too low level to expect non-programmers to do anything useful.

Other analysis programs try to offer all the functionality that the designers think will be wanted. They end up doing 90% of what is required. The remaining 10% is sorely missed, but nothing can be done about that because the program is fixed, inextensible.

Microcal's Origin allows functionality to be extended with a inelegant scripting language which has a steep learning curve - too steep for most users. However, it does do 90% of what most of the users here want. But it is not possible to override or change the display methods, so plotting 500,000 points is slooow.

Maybe I should take a look at Insight (which I have just discovered)??

