
Subject: IDL FAQ announcement.

Posted by [sterner](#) on Thu, 17 Nov 1994 22:08:16 GMT

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The next post is the IDL FAQ itself. This post explains what's new.

As of 1994 Oct 27 I am taking my turn at being the IDL FAQ maintainer for awhile. There are very few changes to the recent information in the IDL FAQ, just a few minor updates. However it now has a new look, actually two new looks.

The version posted to the news groups will be very similar to the previous FAQ, but with a few notable changes.

(1) It is no longer designed to work with emacs as a browser.

The reason is explained below.

(2) The layout may not always be quite as well formatted as before.

The reason for this is also explained below.

The other version of the IDL FAQ is now available in HTML format.

That means it can be more conveniently accessed using a World Wide Web (WWW) browser such as mosaic or netscape. This is the real version of the FAQ. The posted text version is derived from the HTML version by simply saving it from the browser as a Plain Text file. I tried to match the existing format of the FAQ as best as possible, it's close, not exact, but probably good enough.

If you are not familiar with the WWW or WWW browsers you should seriously consider checking into them. A number of browsers are available free.

NCSA (National Center for Supercomputing Applications) mosaic may be obtained from the anonymous ftp site

ftp.ncsa.uiuc.edu in directory /Mosaic

It is available for Unix workstations, PC Windows, and Macs. The one requirement is a good connection to the internet.

The new IDL FAQ is in HTML format. HTML is Hyper Text Markup Language, this basically means there are embedded text formatting commands in the file. No knowledge of HTML is needed to access the HTML version using a WWW browser (however HTML is very easy to learn).

The advantages of the HTML version are worth the change. The HTML version looks sharp. Headers are displayed in larger text, important items are highlighted using bold text or italic, and dividers are used to separate each section.

It is easier to find answers in the HTML version. You click the mouse on a question number and instantly jump to the answer. There are also a few cross-references (more will be added as time permits and the need arises), a click on a cross-reference will jump to that topic.

References to other IDL related WWW pages are now actually active links, just click on them to go to that page.

You can link to this page from your own WWW pages. I would suggest downloading the HTML version of the IDL FAQ so you always have a local copy. The ftp site sometimes goes down in severe storms or for occasional maintainance, plus we have this guy Don that crunches monstrously large SAR images and sometimes bogs the system down (the system should actually be pretty accessable). The HTML version has purposely been kept self-contained, everything is in one single file.

I want to thank the previous IDL FAQ maintainers for their excellent job in providing this information, without them there would be no FAQ. I hope you all enjoy the HTML version.

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