
Subject: Re: Response to question about PV-WAVE and IDL

Posted by [eckman](#) on Thu, 21 Feb 1991 01:12:55 GMT

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In article <KHB.91Feb20141957@chiba.Eng.Sun.COM> khb@chiba.Eng.Sun.COM (Keith Bierman fpgroup) writes:

>

> So the question remains. What are the technical differences (other
> than point and click front end)?

While I can't comment directly on the technical differences between IDL and PV-Wave, I have been using IDL for over 10 years and have used a demo copy of PV-Wave. I still remember the days when !HIVOLT was a system variable back on the PDPs! My impression is that there's minimal difference. It's clear that the Precision Visual folks do have some new features but these appear to be related primarily to support new graphics devices (e.g., TEK 4100).

The beauty of IDL for the scientific researcher is the ability to use it as a programming language. It's far more than just a plotting package. While point and click interfaces might be great for managerial types, it seems to defeat the whole purpose of the package. Admittedly, I haven't tried the new PV-Wave point and click front end, but that's my initial impression.

Precision Visual does also offer a support hotline and a slightly prettier manual but I've never had difficulty in getting the RSI folks to solve a problem in short order.

The main difference that pushed me towards RSI, rather than PV-Wave, was cost. IDL was substantially less expensive for our VAXstations and DECstations. I'd personally rather deal with the people who wrote the original software, no matter how competent the folks at Precision Visual clearly are.

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disclaimer: Opinions are obviously my own, not those of NASA.
