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Subject: Re: Astronomys` Sixth Neighbour Needs Help  
Posted by [Ben Panter](#) on Mon, 28 Jul 2003 12:40:57 GMT  
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Bruno,

> I talked to the administrator here about that nice value and  
> understand it now. Thanks Benjamin, it sounds like a good  
> alternative. So you are also dealing with the beauties of astronomy  
> programming?! They never told me I would have to program this much to  
> do some science.

<heavy sigh>

Yeup.

I use IDL to drive something called "MOPED" - basically a very good compression algorithm. It allows you to work out model parameters very quickly - we get star formation history information out of sloan galaxy spectra. In my case, each spectra takes about 3mins - which is great compared to the brute force approach which is more like 10+ hours. 3 minutes sounds pretty short - but then I do have 135 000 galaxies to look at (so far!). If you're very bored one day, check out astro-ph and look for "Panter"

On the plus side though - all this computing means that you

- a) Don't have to get cold at telescopes
- b) Don't have to reduce your own data
- c) Don't have to use blink tables
- d) Have unlimited access to Google

I think we get a better deal...

> I am also writing because in an attempt to test the program with the  
> changes suggested by Pavel, I tried a 15000 star field and IDL spat  
> out, after an hour and a half of processing (so it must have just  
> finished the calculation of the distances and the sorting of these),  
> that it could not allocate the memory necessary to make the array...  
> have I now achieved the limits of the program for this computer or is  
> there some way of going around this problem?

You've heard of GIYF? I think here it might be JDSIYF!

Ben

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Ben Panter, Edinburgh

My name (no spaces)@bigfoot which is a com.

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