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Subject: Re: Restore IDL code from .sav file?

Posted by [JD Smith](#) on Thu, 01 Jan 2004 00:34:32 GMT

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On Mon, 29 Dec 2003 13:24:58 -0700, Craig Markwardt wrote:

> "Haje Korth" <haje.korth@jhupl.edu> writes:

>

>> Jonathan,

>> hey that story sounds familiar, happened to me too once. Unfortunately

>> there is probably nothing you can do about it at this point. Craig

>> Markwardt had routines that do exactly what you want (and what I

>> needed) included in his cmsvlib for a few days. But then a herd of

>> people including RSI started beating on him for publishing proprietary

>> information, so he withdrew the routine prodis, which caused all this

>> hassle. [ ... ]

>

> After Kodak threatened a potential lawsuit, and implied a threat to my

> job, I did indeed withdraw the core translator for IDL save files with

> code.

>

> I believed, and I still believe, that there are legitimate uses for a

> save file translator, and it is not illegal. We as users are not

> required to protect RSI's flawed business models. I developed the

> translator code because I myself accidentally deleted some source code,

> and needed to recover it from a save file. Obviously other people have

> the same problem. I have been recommending that people with this same

> need contact RSI and explain their dilemma. And further, I recommend

> against using save files for code.

The basic issue, I believe, is that Kodak/RSI would like to move IDL away from being a tool used by scientist who, almost without exception, share their code with each other, to a "platform" for developers and software entrepreneurs, ala Java. The ironic thing is how completely open most IDL code is, despite the very closed nature of the IDL core itself. And frankly, it is this spirit of open sharing that has kept IDL alive. Even people like David Fanning, who make a living selling IDL-related services and information, have adopted an essentially open-source philosophy (though they may curse it at times). Imagine postings like:

"I found a new solution to this tricky sorting problem which uses HISTOGRAM to achieve speed-up of 10x or more. You can find it on shareware.com as a .SAV file. It only costs \$14.95, and you'll get free updates for life after that."

That just would never work. That's not the kind of language IDL is; it doesn't address questions that people want immediate, canned, not-too-expensive answers to, like an mp3 player shaped like a banana

or an easy to use calendar widget with color-coded phases of the moon. For better or worse, IDL is a tinkerer's language... and I'd be willing to bet it will remain that, or fade into obscurity.

JD

P.S. In the interest of full disclosure, I should say that even I am not immune to the lure of "compiled" IDL programs running under the free IDLVM. Mea culpa.

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