Paul Van Delst writes:

>> In a word, objects. :-)
>
> I disagree mightily with that, but anyway....

I meant in the sense of a programming language construct.
There is nothing similar in MatLab, to my knowledge.
And, frankly, I wouldn't even consider a language these
days that didn't allow me to start my day writing another
object. They are just that much fun! :-)

> Hasn't matlab been object based from the get go? For example, the standard out-of-the-box
> "plot" in matlab (or , at least, the window that the plot is displayed in) has the
> functionality that I lay awake at night dreaming about for IDL plots. You can zoom, change
> the line properties, print, etc. You can probably create legends too (but I'm not sure).
> This is how a regular old "plot" should work in IDL. I guess iTools are the attempt to do
> this in IDL.

I guess you are right, but why aren't people using
them, then? When I am in the field I hear, "Oh, I tried
that, but it seemed too complicated.", or "I couldn't
figure it out." Maybe the tutorials will help (assuming
we can get the directions to match the save files).

> As to the OP question of "why do non-envi users use IDL" ? Well, in my case, it's because
> the matlab licensing procedure appears (horror of horrors) to be even more labyrinthine
> than that for IDL (how can that be!?!). Oh, and:
> - I have a crapload of IDL code
> - Everything in matlab seems to be a string, 4-byte integer, or 8-byte real. What's
>   the go with that?

I was just thinking in the shower that one of the reasons MatLab
can get retaining of windows right from the start is that it
probably *always* does the equivalent of RETAIN=2. IDL is
probably more flexible than MatLab in any number of ways, which
is it's power and curse. What IDL does wrong, I think, is
assume the user is going to read the documentation. It needs
better default cases, and the documentation needs to be written
from the point of view of a user and not a developer, especially
with regard to how to get your computer set up to work with
IDL. (Oh, and then they could fix the TV command so that it
works like IMGDISP or TVIMAGE, but I guess that's another story.)

Cheers,

David

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