Subject: Re: Q: Who knows IDL?
Posted by sterner on Wed, 17 May 1995 07:00:00 GMT
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grunes@news.nrl.navy.mil (Mitchell R Grunes) writes:

. . .

> IDL and its very similar sister PV-WAVE are discussed in
> newsgroup comp.lang.idl-pvwave. You might look at the FAQ:
> ftp://rtfm.mit.edu/pub/usenet/comp.lang.idl-pvwave

The latest IDL FAQ as a web page is at:

ftp://fermi.jhuapl.edu/www/s1r/idl/idl_faq/idl_faq.html

Text and compressed versions (HTML and text) are in the same directory.

> There are at least six minor deficiencies of IDL and PV-WAVE:
> (1) If you can't recast a problem into array notation, loops are quite
> slow. These are interpreters. They will never replace Fortran
> or C.

Loops are no problem if you can do enough processing each time through a loop. Before starting a major project some time ago we were trying to decide what language to use, C or IDL. Some C software existed to do a needed job and I was challenged to do the same job in IDL. I wanted to use IDL and was told that if the processing time was within a factor of 2 or so then IDL could be used. The C code was by a good C programmer. Unexpectedly my IDL software was about twice as fast as the C. Some excuse was offered (can't remember exactly what it was) but I pointed out that the excuse would not have been mentioned if the C code had been faster. Development time is much faster with IDL. I have done both FORTRAN and C in the past but have no real need for them any longer (I know some applications do require them).

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