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Subject: Re: object widgets

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 03 Mar 2005 07:47:12 GMT

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Mark Schellens writes:

> I had already a look at it, and it seems to be exactly what I want but  
> is at least some raw documentation available? Or the sourcecode?

The code itself is extensively documented and mostly accurate. I take great pains to keep it up-to-date as much as I can. In fact, objects can document themselves. What is not available is a User's Guide, with the big picture of how these 80 plus objects can be used with one another. Programmers who use the library currently don't seem to need much more than what is already there, but I am about to teach the library to two people who have never programmed in IDL before. We will see how much hand-holding they are going to need. :-)

I think if you are comfortable with objects generally, I can explain in a couple of hours how the whole thing works. There are some tricks, ways of doing things, that are important, but these are almost all illustrated in the example program that comes with the library. Our mantra while building the library was "simple and easy". "Even scientists should be able to use it," we kept telling ourselves. You don't have to know anything at all about object graphics to use the library unless you really, really want to. But 95% of what we build, we build with good ol' direct graphics.

Like anything else, you have to build about three programs with the library and then pretty much everything is trivial. It helps to have some knowledge of widget programming, generally, but working with widgets is greatly simplified. Pretty much everything you want to do with a widget occurs with `GetProperty` and `SetProperty` methods. Communication between objects is simple and acts very much like widget event handling.

We are currently having some issues getting the code to work perfectly on all platforms. We push pretty hard on some things, and we have the usual cross-platform headaches that come with any but the simplest programs. (If you have ever looked at any of the code supplied with IDL, you know we are not the only ones running into these kinds of problems.)

Around here the source code is known as Fanning's Folly because it was suppose to be a Gold Mine and it has

turned into something of an albatross. The bottom line is this: we took two years to build the library, we \*know\* we can build applications with it, so we presume it might have some commercial value for someone other than us. It's a quixotic point of view, but we are sticking with it, at least for now. So, yes, you can see the source code, but it will probably cost you. :-)

> De-facto standard meant something almost everybody here uses.

Around here is means whatever happens to be at hand and \*almost\* works. :-)

Cheers,

David

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