
Subject: Re: GDL?

Posted by [Ken Mankoff](#) on Tue, 22 Mar 2005 00:06:16 GMT

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On Mon, 21 Mar 2005, Y.T. wrote:

- > My employ in the space sciences appears to come to an end soon and
- > with it access to IDL - the single most comfortable tool I've
- > ever used on a computer (for 12 years and counting).

Unless you happen to be a student. IDL recently (a few years ago now?) started supporting an \$99 USD student edition.

- > So I've been looking around and stumbled over "GDL - the Gnu Data
- > Language". It looks like a worthy goal and if it were only 80%
- > compatible with IDL, I'd be more than happy.
- >
- > So here's the question: has anybody actually used GDL?

I used it. I don't use it often, but I keep it installed and up-to-date (via fink (unstable cvs), so it isn't 100% up-to-date) on my OS X boxes. It works fine for me for line plotting and simple math.

- > Someone who has used IDL in the past and can give a decent
- > overview over the pros and cons?

It does not support the MAP_* routines which is the main reason I don't use it much. I haven't done any speed trials in it.

- > I see the latest GDL version is 4 or 5 months old
- No, I think it is *much* more actively developed than that. Maybe a few weeks old?

- > does that mean nobody is working on it or that it is stable?
- The dev team is small AFAIK. It is stable in that I haven't had any crashes with the little bit of usage I have given it. Recent posts by the developer implies it is more stable than IDL. Well, maybe not more stable, but it gracefully handles a few places where IDL segfaults.

- > What are the major incompatibilities (if any)?
- The large chunk (> 20%) of IDL that is not implemented yet.

I hope someday it will support Aqua. Maybe when Marc implements the GUI code he will use wxWidgets? That would be great.

But I think the best way to answer your question is to download and run it. If you cannot for some reason, and would like to send me a test procedure, I'll run it for you.

-k.

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