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Subject: Re: Saving IDL History Across Sessions...  
Posted by [JD Smith](#) on Thu, 05 May 2005 18:03:10 GMT  
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On Thu, 05 May 2005 00:43:02 -0400, Ken Mankoff wrote:

>  
> On Thu, 4 May 2005, Robi wrote:  
>> who died and made emacs the required editor for an observer to use?  
> vi? Just kidding {dons flame-retardant suit}.  
>  
> What platform are you on? What environment do you use normally?  
> xterm? idlde? Terminal.app? I'm going to assume xterm on \*nix.  
>  
> Who said your users need to be aware that they are in emacs? How is  
> the IDLWAVE shell any different from an xterm + IDL session?  
> (Answer: it is much better!) What about this in an xterm?:  
> emacs -nw -f idlwave-shell

Make this a button on your toolbar... it's what I do. In fact, make a button which runs:

```
emacs --eval "(idlwave-shell 'quick)" --eval '(idlwave-shell-send-command "observe")'
```

Where "observe" is your main IDL routine, and you'll be up and running in no time. You've acknowledged that your users don't need to know all of IDL to be productive. Similarly, you don't need to know everything about IDLWAVE to use it. In fact I suspect the majority of IDLWAVE users don't even know they're using IDLWAVE. If you can type commands at a prompt, you can use IDLWAVE (not use it well, but use it at least as well as an XTerm).

If you want to make your saved command history very deep, try:

```
(setq comint-input-ring-size 1024)
```

in the default .emacs for the users.

> The only problem with this is if a routine crashes, they will find  
> themselves looking at source code (the line the error occurred on)  
> rather than a normal IDL error message. You could probably turn this  
> feature off (ask JD), or just put a big sticky-note on the monitor  
> telling them to hit the three necessary keys to return to the shell.  
> And some would say that is a feature not a problem.

As they would in IDLDE or an XTerm in the event of a crash. A sticky which tells them to type "retall" is all you need (true in the IDLDE, IDLWAVE, or an XTerm). Even better, bind "retall" to a key like F4:

```
(add-hook 'idlwave-shell-mode-hook  
  (lambda ()  
    (local-set-key [f4] 'idlwave-shell-retall)))
```

in the default .emacs, and attach a label to the keyboard key. You could make as many of these as you want, customized for various observatory-specific functions to run. Doesn't get much easier for a user than that.

JD

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