
Subject: IDL, GDL, copyright, EULAs and such
Posted by [Y.T.](#) on Wed, 06 Jul 2005 17:12:47 GMT

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So I've been playing around with GDL, simply because I like IDL. I like GDL's focus on the essentials - I wouldn't mind widget-tools, but I consider them a luxury, really. And if GDL never acquires the incomprehensible object junk of IDL, it'll be too soon.

However much of the power of IDL lies in the library, of course - and thus GDL's weakness lies in the lack of that library.

For now, I figure, there shouldn't be a problem with my re-using the routines from my valid, legal IDL installation -- it is just a massive pain when such an essential tool like "linfit" is unavailable. So I copy it from my /usr/local/rsi to a local GDL-directory. No big deal.

Or is it a big deal? The routine is copyrighted by RSI, no? Am I allowed to use it on a program like GDL that is quite blatantly intended to be a free replacement for IDL? Can I use my idl/lib routines as long as I have a functioning IDL installation? Do I have to stop using them as soon as my license expires? But the license is only for IDL, no? That's why the hasp-thingee only protects use of the binary, right? So the library should be considered "acquired" and still be allowed to be used with GDL even in the absence of a working IDL. No? Yes?

The longer I think about it the less sure I am that running GDL might not be in violation of the "reverse engineering" clause in the IDL license agreement or some such -- except that that would only apply to people who actually have a valid installation of IDL since only those would ever have agreed to that license.

And the IDL license actually never spells out what the "software" really is that is being licensed -- whether it is IDL itself or also the contents of idl/lib/*

Since I'm already pretty confused by the whole notion of "intellectual property" (and much more so on the 'net) I figure I'll throw this out as an open-ended question -- can I continue to use basic, trivial functions like "poly.pro" or "factorial.pro" with GDL after IDL has expired? How about more complex stuff? Why or why not? What's the status of the routines that were originally from NR?

I'm just baffled.

cordially

Y.T.

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