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Subject: Re: IDL, GDL, copyright, EULAs and such  
Posted by Y.T. on Wed, 13 Jul 2005 17:40:18 GMT

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- > But I think if you look around
- > <http://www.astro.washington.edu/deutsch/idl/htmlhelp/>
- >
- > You'll find that almost all the IDL code has been duplicated by
- > someone else somewhere else. You are probably allowed to use that.

Maybe someone needs to start collecting these things and compile them into a "free idl-alike .pro library". The value of something like GDL would really increase drastically through this.

And earlier, Christopher Lee wrote:

- > There's a free version of linfit at
- > <http://www.astro.washington.edu/deutsch-bin/getpro/library37.html?LINFIT>
- >
- > it's not the same as the IDL version, so you'd need to work it into a
- > function, and add the keywords that the IDL version makes available

Not to sound ungrateful, but that's kinda pointless. I can write my own version of linfit (and everything else in the IDL library). If I have to write scads of code to make a trivial algorithm work, then I might as well implement the whole thing myself.

The point was that there's already an existing library that has it all inside - the IDL library. Up until recently, RSI could be rather cavalier about sharing this around as the library files are pretty nigh useless without a working installation of IDL. So they put all their license-enforcement efforts into the binary and didn't fuss when/where people shared .pro-files around.

But these days, the library suddenly attains value by itself as the binary core can be replaced (to better and better degree) with GDL.

Some of this is very intimately linked to IDL and it's workings -- like all the windowing/widget stuff. But for myself I don't need those things -- all \*my\* routines that need complex user-interactions have been talking to ports for the last five years or so where the user can pick things up with his/her favorite web-browser (which doesn't even have to run on the same computer).

But there's other routines, and linfit is an obvious example, that are not in the least married to IDL - but who's well-defined (by RSI) interface still expedites software development. We can all start writing our own versions, but then my programs would either become non-portable or otherwise lumbering hunks of re-re-re-duplicated code.

The longer I think about it, the more I realize that the ability to replicate (copy? re-write? cobble together from various places? reverse-engineer? mimick? which of these is legal these days under the RSI license?) the library is going to be the thing that'll make GDL stand or fall.

just some thoughts...

cordially

Y.T.

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Remove YourClothes before you email me.

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