

Y.T. wrote:

>> 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.

Well, that is already on the way. As Chris already pointed out:
Several routines which come with GDL are written in GDL (src/pro
subdirectory).

> 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.

It is their code. If visible (.pro) or not (IDL binary).
I would treat it the same way.

from another post:

> As long as nobody looks at my harddisk, obviously there's no problem
> here anywhere. But lets say I tinker with GDL and write some kind of
> groundbreaking stock-trading software or some kind of super-accurate
> prediction code for earthquakes -- something that makes me rich enough

- > to become a worthy target for litigation and famous enough for all the
- > litigators to know that I exist. At that point I'd rather not have RSI
- > thugs kick down my door and demand all my money because I did my linear
- > fits with a routine that had their copyright in the header.

Not being an expert for law as well to me it is pretty obvious that you cannot use IDL's code and distribute it with GDL applications.

But if an algorithm is that obvious you can use it of course.

Just write it yourself and don't copy it.

It will look different. Even if it is similar: I think nobody could convince a judge that you should pay anything because you used **similar** code, especially if a subroutine is almost trivial.

But if you use the **same** code it might be different.

- > 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.

Therefore put the routines you wrote in/for GDL under the GPL and contribute them.

The more people do the quicker the library gets filled.

- > 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? mimic? 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.

You are right. But it is not about the IDL library only but the internal (C++) routines as well or even more. And thats is what the developers and me mainly work on.

Join in!

Cheers,
marc
