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Subject: New IDL book for beginning programmers  
Posted by [K. Bowman](#) on Fri, 06 Jan 2006 18:39:34 GMT  
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For the last few years I have been teaching programming to undergrad and grad students at Texas A&M using IDL. Over time my course notes grew to book size, so the logical next step, of course, was to publish it!

With several estimable IDL books on the market, what was the need for yet another? As I discovered in class, our students, including most incoming graduate students, typically have little or no programming experience in \*any\* language (with the possible exception of Maple). I found that the existing IDL books assume at least a basic understanding of programming that was not present in our students. So my new book is aimed at beginners, that is, anyone just learning to program. After all, why not start them off right with IDL, rather than fusty old Fortran or C?

So, An Introduction to Programing with IDL is now available from Academic Press (Elsevier).

[http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/bookdescription.cws\\_home/705017/description#description](http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/bookdescription.cws_home/705017/description#description)

With students in mind, the book is paperback and retails for \$50US. Registered students who purchase the book can get the student version of IDL at a discounted price (\$49).

I have set up a small web site to accompany the book (<http://idl.tamu.edu>). At present it provides the example programs and data files from the book. It also includes examples of simple IDL graphics. You can view the complete table of contents of the book and a sample chapter. Over time I hope to add programming problems that can be used as course assignments.

As a beginner's book, there is a lot of IDL that I have chosen to leave out, including: pointers, object graphics, widgets, and objects. I have found it to be a sufficient challenge to teach integer and floating point arithmetic, arrays, file I/O, functions and procedures, argument passing, direct graphics, color, mapping, and a few data analysis tools!

Please have a look at the book or the web site if you have a chance. Comments and suggestions can be sent to me at the e-mail address below.

Thanks to all the contributors to this newsgroup who have taught me much of what I know about IDL. I'm still allowed to ask dumb questions here, though.

Cheers, Ken

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