
Subject: Re: Writing graphics device drivers using idl

Posted by [rivers](#) on Thu, 27 Jul 1995 07:00:00 GMT

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In article <3v8hf1\$lus@lo-fan.jpl.nasa.gov>, "Evan F. Fishbein" <eff@tugh.jpl.nasa.gov> writes:
> I am thinking about writing a graphics device driver to generate fig
> code. Does anyone have experience using linkimage, and/or writing device
> driver. An example would be very helpful.
>

I have written device drivers for a number of devices (frame grabbers, film recorders, DEC Sixel devices). RSI used to distribute my drivers in the "user_contrib" directory, but I think that directory is no longer included as of 4.0. If you have a 3.x distribution available you can get them there.

You need to get a copy of the IDL Internals Manual, which explains exactly how to do it. I think RSI have always distributed this manual free of charge to those who request it.

An alternative to writing a device driver is to use the Z device to generate a bit map and write an external converter. You might also be able to use the Postscript device and write a ghostscript back-end for your device.

Based on my experience I would recommend writing a device driver for devices which are "interactive" such as a frame grabbers. It is then possible to do:

```
IDL> SET_PLOT, 'ITI' ; Use frame grabber
IDL> DEVICE, /SNAP ; Grab a frame
IDL> image = TVRD() ; Read it into IDL
IDL> set_plot, 'X' ; Switch to X device
IDL> tvscl, image ; Display image on X
```

For "offline" devices it is probably simpler and more versatile to write an external converter.

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