
Subject: Re: iTools/interactive Analysis >
Posted by [Phony Account](#) on Thu, 06 Apr 2006 13:55:56 GMT
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I love iTools.

I use them to capture post-processed data from simulations and generate presentation quality plots. I like the fact that I can open up the saved file, and all the data is there, and I can tweak the look of the plot.

What is missing are two things:

Capability to add notes to an iTool. I don't mean text that shows on the screen, but internal notes. I would use that facility to remind myself how I got the data, and stuff like that.

The second thing that is missing is actually a tall task: ideally, an iTool would capture the whole data analysis session from start to finish. Let me explain:

I work in a corporate environment, and everybody around me uses Excel for data analysis. Now, spreadsheets may not match to such highly performing packages such as IDL and Matlab, but in an excel spreadsheet file, you have the data, the operations on the data, and the plots. (btw, the plots are a pain to work with and look awful, at least as compared to iTools). So, once you save your spreadsheet, you can open it months later, and everything will be there.

There is plenty bad with data analysis in spreadsheets:

- It is hard to see the flow of the data analysis - at a glance it is hard to see what depends on what.
- You see all the data whether you need to or not - I see spreadsheets with columns and columns of data.

One can work around those problems, but the format of the spreadsheet interface drives you to poor "aesthetic" practice.

Several times in the past I have considered writing an spread-sheet type data-analyzer in IDL. All the data-processing facilities would have to be encapsulated in objects with a uniform interface. But unfortunately, I just never get fired or laid of, so I never have the time to pursue that project.

On the other hand, if you thought iTools were slow, this one would be much, much slower :-)

On the other other hand, at the company where I work (Tokyo Electron Limited) we are striving to provide semiconductor manufacturers with tools to make THz chips.

Mirko
