
Subject: Re: IDL & iTools used as post-processor for other commercial software
Posted by [MarioIncandenza](#) on Wed, 04 Oct 2006 15:51:41 GMT

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Comparing Mirko and Bob's viewpoints does show a remarkable degree of convergence in what is possible with the two approaches. The idea that you might be able to meet the requirements of a peer-reviewed profession with an interactive tool is pretty impressive, honestly. The cornerstone of these requirements is that any graphic produced can be re-generated on-demand starting from the data in a relatively raw form, or using different data. Bob's scripts contain the entire process, which I think is probably pretty typical for scientific users. My own scripts generally start with loading data (often several hundred MB).

Does iTools have a mechanism (or perhaps, could one be built in) to keep the code used to distill from the "original" input datasets down to the numbers for the plot? With this feature, you truly could go from having a script associated with every plot to having an iTool. This might actually be an improvement over a script-based process, although I don't know if it would get me to switch. Since everything I do graphically is 96% recycled code, the cost-benefit calculation is pretty tight.

But anyway, even the suggestion that an interactive tool can produce acceptable, reproducible on-demand results I find very encouraging. I know too many people who have turned away from science because a) "if I wanted to be a programmer, I'd have studied programming," or b) "if all I'm doing is programming, why don't I just get paid for it?"

--Edward H.
