
Subject: Re: .sav format

Posted by [Craig Markwardt](#) on Sun, 04 Feb 2007 07:44:36 GMT

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"Haje Korth" <haje.korth@nospam.jhuapl.edu> writes:

> Mike,
> now that you opened the can of worms... I am aware of Craig's description
> fo how variables are stored in the sav files. However, if I remember right,
> the following notice was incorporated into the sav files after Craig's great
> discoveries:
>
> *****
> NOTICE:
>
> IDL Save/Restore files embody unpublished proprietary information
> about the IDL program. Reverse engineering of this file is therefore
...
> Research Systems, Inc.
> *****
>
> Thus touching the sav files in any other way than using save/restore has
> turned into a big grey area (the can of worms). IMHO, it is easier to avoid
> the format if at all possible than to deal with possible legal actions.

This warning only applies to you if you are an IDL licensee. If you are not a licensee, then then you never agreed to the IDL EULA, and it could not apply to you.

I understand that most people here in the newsgroup are probably IDL users, but I can imagine that non-IDL programmers interfacing their own code with IDL save files could use the data unencumbered. The documentation is also unencumbered.

The claimed intent of the RSI "license" [*] included in my package was to *allow* IDL licensees to use the library I developed. And by "claimed intent," I mean the stated intent of RSI personnel at the time. Thus, everybody -- both IDL licensees and non-licensees -- can use the library and format without fear.

The "license" is not a taking away of anything, but rather an offering of permission to IDL licensees by RSI with certain conditions. If you need or want permission, then accept the conditions. If you don't need or want permission, then don't accept the conditions and proceed accordingly. There are no copyright terms in the .pro files themselves which bind to the RSI "license."

I personally think that the "license" is non-sensical. There is no

reason for a person to need permission from a third party to run software obtained from another, and on their own data. However, at the time I was under threat of a lawsuit from suits at KodakKorp [+]. If including a string of text in the package could make that threat go away, then so be it.

The knowledge of the world is still net positive. Without my library, IDL save files would be utterly closed and opaque. With the library, and an acceptance of RSI's conditions, there are many more possibilities. With the freely available format documentation, there are still more possibilities. Those are a good things.

Sorry for pontificating! :-)
Craig

[*] RSI = ITTVIS

[+] Kodak = previous owners of RSI

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Astrophysics, IDL, Finance, Derivatives | Remove "net" for better response
