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Subject: Re: Hello again, and iTools

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 08 Mar 2007 14:50:35 GMT

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Struan writes:

- > It's been a while, but I have recently started programming in IDL
- > again. Great to see some old names still posting here, and the new
- > ones too.

Hi Struan, nice to see you back here again. :-)

- > Naturally I wish to save time, effort and frustration...
- > but now I feel the siren call of iTools and I am wondering if I should
- > swim to land or stuff my ears with parsley?

Programming iTools is generally not included in the same thought process that considers saving time, effort, and frustration as a goal, in my humble experience. :-)

Rather, for me, programming iTools is about the most complicated, complex, and maddening endeavor I've ever encountered with IDL. I've mostly given it up as a lost cause because I've come to the conclusion it is not possible to learn this system from the current documentation. A direct connection to someone at ITTVIS is also required, it seems to me. But, of course, I've been known to get things wrong and maybe complicated systems are beyond my abilities now. Who knows? I offer as contrary evidence the fact that my tennis game is still improving, and that's a pretty complicated system.

- > In short: are the iTools stable, usable and extendable enough to make
- > it worth my while to learn the whole application framework?

Oddly enough I was having this conversation just yesterday with someone in a position to know something about iTools. I was curious about possibly writing a book about the darn things, mostly motivated by two observations: ITTVIS seems committed to them and no one I know uses them. I thought there might be an entrepreneurial opportunity lurking somewhere in there.

But I've put the idea on the back shelf. It seems a great deal is changing with IDL, mostly to accommodate an anticipated move to a new IDLDE sometime in the future. And iTools, which even ITTVIS recognizes are too complicated for most customers, are receiving extra scrutiny. In short, no one currently knows what the landscape is going to look like a year or two from now. That's too much risk for me.

I think with the amount of time and money that has been spent on them that iTools, or something very like them, will exist for a long time. But exactly what form they will take is WAY beyond my ability to predict. Presumably software written today will work well into the future. That has always been ITTVIS's commitment and I don't doubt it will be true of iTools, too.

And on the bright side, if you start today it's possible you might be able to explain iTools to me when I finally get around to writing that book. ;-)

Cheers,

David

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David Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.

Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>

Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

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