
Subject: Re: IDL and PV-WAVE?

Posted by [Peter Sharer](#) on Fri, 12 Jan 1996 08:00:00 GMT

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I have recently gone through a similar exercise of determining the differences between the two packages. Our group has been using IDL for several years and have been quite happy with it, but we were looking for a point-and-click data analysis application to complement IDL. PV-Wave has its roots in IDL. In fact, if you check the FAQ you will learn that PV-Wave began with a one-time snapshot of the IDL source code in 1990, for which Visual Numerics paid several million dollars. So, for several years there was very little difference and even now most of the syntax is almost identical. They do differ in their widget programming philosophies, IDL uses a proprietary system (some say easier to program), while PV-Wave is a Motif based system (more standard). An additional difference, one that is attractive to us, is that Visual Numerics has added a point-and-click analysis module.

I visited with both companies at the American Geophysical Union meeting just before the holidays. I was impressed with the PV-Wave data analysis tools which are lacking in IDL, so I went down the aisle to the folks at RSI. They recognize that IDL falls short on this capability, and say that the next version, due sometime in '96 (they made no commitment to the release date), will include it.

For us this is a tough decision as we want the added capability of PV-Wave and don't really want to wait an indeterminate time for the next IDL release, but most of what we would buy with PV-Wave would not be added value. So we must decide if it is the best value for our investment. If you are not attached to either product, Wave might be a solid choice, though you should evaluate company stability, user support, training opportunities, etc. I can only vouch for RSI. They have been excellent on all accounts.

You might also investigate Visualization Data Explorer from IBM. It is a very different tool from either Wave or IDL. We are now evaluating it.

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