
Subject: Re: Compiling IDL ... ever likey ?
Posted by [David Ritscher](#) on Fri, 02 Feb 1996 08:00:00 GMT
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A few thoughts about the (ever-recurring) IDL compiler discussion:

1. One exists for internal use at RSI. When one makes a big application for redistribution they can create an executable version of of your application for you. This is quite expensive. The Visible Human CD is a demonstration of this approach.
2. MATLAB has recently released a compiler.
3. AVS (Advanced Visual Systems) seems to be making some good progress in this direction. You can build any of your own routines (in C, C++, etc.) into their system. Here in Germany they have a run-time licensing which is very cheap (something like \$30) within any of the universities, and still pretty cheap (about \$100) in industry. It's much more expensive when one needs the network editor available. They are headed in the object-oriented direction, at least in a certain sense of the word, which I also find appealing. They seem to do the graphics stuff quite well, but I still prefer IDL/PVWave for pure mathematical work.
4. There are run-time versions of IDL and PV-Wave available. (with run-time licensing). Something that both lack is the capability to also protect (i.e., license) your application.
5. I often hear comments that 'it would be impossible to make an IDL compiler, for reason X.' However, I think it's relatively clear that the full functionality of IDL or PVWave can be packed into a library, callable from C, etc. There would be, for example, a function 'idl_plot();' or 'pvwave_plot();' that would function exactly like the current plot function. The question is how much of the interpreter to bring along for this purpose, vs. how much do you have to handle all the data manipulation yourself. It would be important to bring along the IDL/PVWave memory allocation system, so that the normal manipulation of data is possible (extract of parts of arrays, the WHERE function, etc.).

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