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Subject: Re: .trace not working?

Posted by [JDS](#) on Mon, 10 Aug 2009 17:33:51 GMT

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> Not to try to make it a contest, just to inform more to others (as you  
> have informed me of what can be done in Emacs): in the workbench  
> editor it is also possible to see a routine's arguments when you park  
> the cursor over its name (even when it is user-defined), open its  
> help, and jump to its definition (even when in another file). There is  
> help on method names and structure fields when typing them in the  
> editor and command line, and there are browsers for the command  
> history, profiler results, and routines defined in a file (the outline  
> view).

I haven't really used the workbench much, so this is interesting to know. Routine info is in IDLWAVE for system-distributed, compiled, buffer-loaded, and scanned routines. You can also pre-scan all your local routines, and many libraries (like Fanning, NASALib, etc.) ship pre-scanned. Which means you can get help on a routine even before IDL has compiled it, even if you can't quite remember its name, even if the shell isn't running (e.g. no license available). Context-sensitive help is there too. You can also jump directly to help on individual keywords, saving you scrolling down to find them. You can get help on structure tags for structures defined elsewhere in your code (like 'state'), object fields, control statements, system variables, etc., etc.

That said, completion is probably the one area where IDLWAVE still (AFAIK) exceeds the Workbench: you can complete routine names, keywords, reserved words, system variables, structure members, object methods, filenames on disk, etc., all with the (alt-)tab key. I find myself hitting tab and groaning constantly when I've used the Workbench. But, as David says, admittedly the learning curve is steeper compared to the point-and-click browsers. Actually, it's not that it's really that steep, it's just that it sits near the top of the giant Emacs learning peak.

All of this brings up an

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Informal survey:

( ) IDLWHO?

( ) I recently switched from IDLWAVE to the Workbench.

( ) I use both IDLWAVE and Workbench, depending on the setting/task/context.

( ) You can pry IDLWAVE from my cold, dead hands.

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For the record, I don't mind in the least if people do switch to the WB. It's the first really featureful IDE they've offered.

JD

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