
Subject: Re: IDL 7

Posted by [Michael Galloy](#) on Fri, 28 Aug 2009 05:13:36 GMT

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James Kuyper wrote:

> The government contract that pays my paycheck recently transferred from
> one company to another, and so, perforce, did I and most of my
> coworkers, along with most of the associated hardware and software. Our
> new employer is going to have to buy new licenses, and I was asked
> whether we should upgrade from IDL 6.3 as well. What's the current
> consensus? I heard a lot of bad things about IDL 7.0 when it first came
> out - has the situation improved? Did it get easier once you got used to
> it?

ITT VIS responded to the "eternal analyzing code" problem and several other issues in the Workbench. I still find it fairly slow, but the features are great. I end of using it only about 20% of the time since I spend most of my time at the Unix command line.

I would recommend IDL 7.1 much more highly than IDL 7.0. Some IDL 7.1 features (these all have articles on my website at michaelgalloy.com that begin "IDL 7.1:"):

- * iTools programmatic API
- * 24-bit PostScript
- * code distribution features (platform extensions for DLMS and update site wizard)
- * Windows command line

IDL 7.0 had the IDL Workbench, but that was such a big change that it seems reasonable to wait a bit for it to be more stable. The MAKE_RT command (from within IDL) was added. There were actually some fairly nice features in the 7.0.x series: IDLdoc support in the Workbench, Mac OS X 64-bit support, and some Workbench tweaks.

IDL 6.4 had:

- * 24-bit Z buffer
- * IDLnetURL class as an HTTP/FTP client

Of course, all three versions had minor bug fixes and other small miscellaneous features (although they are big if it's the one thing you really need).

I wish ITT VIS would produce and publicize a bit more useful set of release notes for each version of IDL. I will try to create at least an overview article about future versions (if I'm feeling motivated I'll try to do the more detailed version with some examples like I did for

IDL 7.1).

Mike

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