

Jean-Paul Davis writes:

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> I'm thinking about writing my first Catalyst application, and I'm

> looking for advice from others more experienced with Catalyst on the

> best design approach to handle the following. I will have a

> complicated object (call it "AnObject" for the sake of argument)

> containing data (including other objects) and methods (including read/

> write). I want this object to have a GUI method as an optional way to

> interact with the data in the object, but I do not want to create a

> GUI unless it's needed; i.e., creating an instance of AnObject should

> not by itself automatically create a GUI.

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> The examples in Catalyst are full "applications" in the sense that the

> application itself is a class derived from a top-level base widget

> class. I could use this application template and simply not call the

> GUI method in order to avoid creating/mapping a GUI, but it seems

> inelegant to use the TLB-widget class as the basis for a non-GUI

> object class. I could make the GUI a separate object that contains an

> AnObject, but that introduces a level of referencing between the

> interaction (GUI) object and the data being manipulated. Or I could

> reverse this so AnObject contains the GUI object if needed, although I

> haven't thought through the data referencing implications. Would one

> of these approaches be the most appropriate, or are there other,

> better approaches?

I often build GUI methods for objects that I sometimes, but not always, want to interact with via a graphical user interface. My NCDF\_DATA object is a good example:

[http://www.dfanning.com/programs/ncdf\\_data\\_\\_define.pro](http://www.dfanning.com/programs/ncdf_data__define.pro)

I often use that without a GUI interface. But if I need one, I can just call the BROWSE method on the object. That, in fact, is exactly what the (extremely!) short NCDF\_BROWSER program does:

[http://www.dfanning.com/programs/ncdf\\_browser.pro](http://www.dfanning.com/programs/ncdf_browser.pro)

I can't think, off-hand, of an instance where I have used the Catalyst Library to build the GUI as in this example, but I can't think why it wouldn't work in principle. Catalyst does assume an object hierarchy, and since it is for building "applications" it pretty much does assume a GUI of some sort. But I think the widget part of the library can pretty much stand alone without difficulty.

Cheers,

David

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

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

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