
Subject: Re: Help with help files.

Posted by [David Foster](#) on Thu, 05 Sep 1996 07:00:00 GMT

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Dyer Lytle wrote:

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>
> Hi all,
>
> I was wondering how people handle on-line documentation in IDL.
> We have developed about 8 different applications in IDL that we
> distribute to our user base of about 40 people at various locations
> and each of these applications has associated with it one or more
> online "help" files. Currently, we ask our users to define their
> "IDL_PATH" so that IDL can find the various tasks to execute and
> we have them define a directory called "IDL_DOC" that we reference
> whenever we call "xdisplayfile" from an application, i.e.
>
> CASE event OF
>
>   'help': BEGIN
>     xdisplayfile,'$IDL_DOC/example.hlp'
>   END
>
> Does anyone know a way to somehow use "IDL_PATH" to find this
> documentation rather than using a separate environmental variable?
> Or perhaps someone has a better approach to IDL on-line documentation?
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If you include \$IDL_DOC or one of its parent directories in IDL_PATH and then put a single file with the .pro extension in the directory, IDL will find it. It does not include directories that do not contain any .pro files.

We use a similar scheme for help files, and I've written a program that you can call to explicitly display a certain help file, or choose from a list of help files. It also lets you look at .pro files as an option. You can search for text in the file, which is pretty useful. The one big difference is this program expects to find the help files in the same directories as the .pro files. If you think this might be useful or something you could modify, let me know and I'll send you a copy.

Dave

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David S. Foster      Univ. of California, San Diego
Programmer/Analyst  Brain Image Analysis Laboratory
foster@bial1.ucsd.edu  Department of Psychiatry
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(619) 622-5892 8950 Via La Jolla Drive, Suite 2200
La Jolla, CA 92037
[UCSD Mail Code 0949]

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