Subject: Re: Help with help files.
Posted by thompson on Wed, 04 Sep 1996 07:00:00 GMT
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Dyer Lytle <dlytle@as.arizona.edu> writes:

> 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 then useing a seperate environmental variable?
> Or perhaps someone has a better approach to IDL on-line documentation?

What we do is to use a program called XDOC which allows one to access the
documentation headers at the beginning of each file. It's a very nice program
where one can explore the entire IDL_PATH tree.

We also have a routine called FIND_WITH_DEF that finds a file anywhere in a
series of directories, so that one could do, for instance

 xdisplayfile, find_with_def('example.hlp', !PATH)

This software is available as part of the Solar Software library at

 http://sohowww.nascom.nasa.gov/software.html
 ftp://sohoftp.nascom.nasa.gov/solarsoft/gen/idl/help (and /system)

I think it's also available from the Astronomy User's Library at

 http://idlastro.gsfc.nasa.gov/ftp/
 ftp://idlastro.gsfc.nasa.gov/

Bill Thompson