Folks,

I've decided to try a little experiment in e-commerce.

I have made up my mind to spend the next year or so
producing a series of "Coyote Guides", based on the
trail guides I used on my hike this summer. I envision
4-5 smallish books on various topics of interest to
IDL programmers.

They are meant to be informal discussions of various
topics, with lots and lots of example code. They are
very personal and include my own biases, preferences,
blind spots, and dumb jokes. I'm sure not everyone is
going to fall in love with them. But if I manage to
pull it off, it will be like taking an intensive IDL
course from me.

The first book in the series and what I am working on
now is a Coyote Guide to Traditional IDL Graphics.
I wanted to start by working on something I was certain
was going to be a great commercial success. :-)

I have several chapters in the book "finished" in the
sense that I am sick to death of reading them and could
use some feedback from real users. I still consider these
in draft form, and there are certainly errors in every
one of these chapters. Probably not so much in the code,
as I test that extensively and use it to produce the
figures in the book (and there are a LOT of them!), but
there are errors in the text for sure. I just can't see
them anymore.

Nevertheless, I think there is a great deal of terrific
information in these chapters. Just to give you an example,
the line plot chapter in my last book was roughly about
10 pages. The line plot chapter in this book is 60 pages,
and it is probably not finished yet. Other graphics topics
have grown in similar proportion. I expect this book alone
might top out at 350-400 pages! I'm putting ALL my secrets
in there, as I plan to retire when this project is over and
drink pina colatas on the beach in Costa Rica.

So, on to my experiment. I don't have a job. I need some

cash. Tom Sawyer and his fence came to mind. :-)

Here is what I am doing. I am selling these draft chapters
on my store in PDF form for $5 each. If you mark up the
chapter and send it back to me with your comments and/or
you contact me with feedback about the chapter (and I really
prefer hard-hitting, constructive comments about the things
I've done wrong or the boneheaded mistakes I've made, rather
than about the stupendous improvement I've made to your
IDL productivity), then you will receive either a free
PDF version of the book when it is finished, or a 25% discount
on a hardcopy version of the book, plus full credit for all
the chapters you already paid for.

The comments have to be reasonably substantial. "I liked it,"
is probably not going to get you a free anything. :-)

In addition to the "costly" chapters, I've put a couple of
chapters on the store that you can download for free. For
example, the very important chapter on how to work with
color in IDL is there for free.

I am working on other chapters now, and I'll add them to
the store when I am finished with them and if this little
experiment seems to be going in a positive direction.

If you are interested, you can find the new chapters here:

  http://www.dfanning.com/store/

As I am sure you know, this IDL newsgroup has always been an
essential part of my IDL education. Pretty much everything
I know about IDL I learned here, either by forcing myself
to answer questions or by paying attention to what the real
experts had to say. Your feedback and participation have
always have always been an enormous inspiration to me. My
sincerest thanks to all of you, as always.

Cheers,

David
--
David Fanning, Ph.D.
Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: http://www.dfanning.com/
Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")