
Subject: Mapping Functionality in IDL 8.1

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Tue, 12 Apr 2011 23:40:55 GMT

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Folks,

I promised to report back from the IDL User Group meeting about the new mapping functionality coming in IDL 8.1 (due out in the morning, as I heard it today at the meeting).

I'm afraid I don't have much to report. The big news is the Map function can now draw a map whose boundaries cross the international date line. (An outstanding bug in the iTool map object since IDL 6.3, when the Map object was introduced.)

The other big mapping news is that that Map object can now use the GSHHS database (when the HIRES keyword is set) in the MapContinents routine. This is a functionality I have been using since 2006 when I wrote Map_GSHHS_Shoreline to draw all my shorelines, and I highly recommend it.

http://www.idlcoyote.com/map_tips/gshhs.html

I wasn't able to determine if it is the implementation of the GSHHS data base that is slow, or if it is the map object that is slow, but we waited quite a long time after the command was typed to see the result. I've never experienced a delay like that with my implementation of GSHHS, so I don't know what to think. I am guessing they always use the full resolution of the GSHHS database, which is almost always unnecessary in practice and does take a LONG time to draw. (My routine allows you to choose the resolution of the GSHHS database you want to use.)

The biggest problem I see with the Map function is that ITTVIS continues to insist that people want to warp an image onto a map projection. I've spent a number of years working professionally with people who did map projections for a living, and I have never once known anyone who wanted to do this. Everyone I know HAS an image (which they emphatically do NOT want to warp!), and they want to fit a map projection onto that.

I'm told to expect more "communication" between the ENVI side of ITTVIS and the IDL side. Here is one case

where listening to the folks who are working with ENVI could pay immediate dividends. As it is now, the Map function in IDL appears to me to be more toy than tool.

Cheers,

David

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

Sepore ma de ni thue. ("Perhaps thos speakest truth.")
