
Subject: Re: IDL 8.1 is a Piece of Work

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 19 Oct 2011 22:43:20 GMT

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Beaker writes:

- > So my question is should we move to 8.1 or stay put, given the
- > problems people are reporting? We don't do anything too fancy
- > visualisation wise, just static 2d plots and maps, so we don't need to
- > sit and the bleeding edge of fancy interactive graphics, if that is
- > what causes the most problems.

Broken graphics routines is about half the problem.

The other half of the problem seems to be the Workbench.

If you use the command line to do non-graphical things,
IDL 8.1 might please you.

Certainly lists and hashes are useful. The object syntax is fabulous. Lists and hashes have been implemented in the IDL language and exist for earlier versions of the language. (I use my LinkedList object for many "listy" things, and Craig Markwardt has a very useful hash object.) As far as I know, there are no "memory" issues with either. They understand how to clean themselves up properly.

I won't be able to use lists and hashes for another couple of years or so, just because of the kind of work I do, but if you are not keen to share your software and/or everyone you know is using a recent version of IDL, then I say go for it.

ITTVIS claims the graphics system is "95% working", but I seem to run into that other 5% every time I try to do something useful. I have made a line plot (sans legend, of course) that works properly. For my purposes, I would say the graphics system is 95% broken. I guess your mileage may vary, because I run into people who say they love the graphics routines. They probably aren't as anal about how things look as I am. :-)

If you do decide to upgrade to IDL 8.1, be sure to purchase the three year maintenance support contract at the same time. I have a feeling you are **really** going to need it. ;-)

Cheers,

David

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

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