
Subject: Cost of student version of IDL

Posted by [Kenneth P. Bowman](#) on Tue, 08 May 2012 15:21:36 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

I am going back into the classroom next fall to teach IDL to undergraduates after spending the last few years as department head. The course alternates between IDL and Matlab, and we have talked about adding a Python version section.

I am working on ways to get students to spend more time outside of class reading my book and working IDL examples in order to create more time in class to work with students individually.

To accomplish this, students need to have a copy of IDL on their personal computers. I looked at the Exelis website yesterday and found that the student edition of IDL is \$89 (\$149 with the IMSL library). That didn't seem too bad until I realized that that price is for a 1-year license! So a sophomore taking my course would need to pay at least \$270 to keep a working IDL license until graduation. Knowing students as I do, most will simply let their licenses lapse.

For reference, my IDL textbook is \$42 on Amazon. When my text was first released (2006), a non-expiring student IDL license was \$49.

We make IDL available in our labs, but the inconvenience of coming to the campus guarantees that students will only use IDL when they *have* to.

For comparison, I see that Mathworks charges \$99 for a student Matlab license

new machine after 4 years, and they charge for upgrades.

In the current environment (with free alternatives like Python), does the IDL student pricing make sense to anyone?

Has anyone worked out better ways to get students access to IDL?

Ken Bowman
