
Subject: Dialog_Pickfile Whack-a-Mole

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Fri, 05 Oct 2012 13:23:47 GMT

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Folks,

I was excited to learn about Mark Piper's recent promotion (right word?) to IDL Product Manager. Although sorry he is leaving the teaching ranks. He was one of the best! We have already seen the benefits of having a programmer's sensibility in that position.

Since I am sitting here this morning reinstalling an operating system after an all-night wiping (and repair, God willing) of the hard drive, I thought I would share some of today's mail bag with Mark.

This letter is from "Vijay" who writes in to complain about his inability to position Dialog_Pickfile, which always appears in the upper-left corner of his display, to his mind the least advantageous spot on the whole computer. I commiserate, because I have been complaining about this lack of positioning control for about as long as Dialog_Pickfile has been with us, to no apparent effect.

Dialog_Pickfile actually only appears in the upper left the first time it's used. Thereafter, on my machine, anyway, it seems to come up in the last place you left it. (I wish to God it could remember the last directory, too, but that's why I use cgPickfile instead of Dialog_Pickfile.)

This letter strikes a chord with me because I have been frustrated with Dialog_Pickfile (via cgPickfile) for a couple of weeks now, too. Roughly corresponding to when I started working more regularly with IDL 8.x.

In a word, I can't find the damn thing half the time!

I type the command and stare at the screen and the grayed-out IDL prompt and think IDL has gone into a funk again (seems unlikely, but...), when I finally discover the dialog back behind another graphics window, or even behind the IDL workbench itself!

To my mind a blocking dialog should be, you know, somewhere where you can see the darn thing. This is

especially annoying when you are showing new IDL users how things work. They can't figure out WHAT is going on!

And, I can't say I understand it, either. Sometimes it's visible and sometimes it's not. I haven't yet figured it out. I just know that the annoyance factor is creeping up. And Vijay's e-mail this morning gives me a chance to mention it and see if anyone else has solved the mystery of where Dialog_Pickfile might or might not appear next.

Cheers,

David

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David Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.

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

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