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Subject: Re: IDL 8.2.2 released

Posted by [Mark Piper](#) on Thu, 07 Feb 2013 00:00:32 GMT

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On Wednesday, February 6, 2013 2:01:34 PM UTC-7, Louis Giglio wrote:

>

> I'm going to de-lurk after many years to comment on this. I'm not sure how many routines are David's, but what I have noticed is an increasing tendency for IDL releases to co-opt the functionality of a third-party routine that was in use long before the feature was formally added to IDL. Examples include LEGEND and COLORBAR. LEGEND is a particularly good example because F. K. Knight's version has been available for ~18 years before an official (and incompatible) version was added to IDL.

>

> Co-opting the names of existing routines of course creates headaches because of the resulting naming conflicts.

>

> While I suppose it's good that 8.2.2 includes a new BOXPLOT routine, I note that it conflicts with Martin Schultz's version which I've used for 13 years. It would be nice if each new release of IDL didn't clobber another existing routine in the process.

Hi Louis,

This is a tough one, and IDL's blessing/curse of a single namespace is the problem. Because of this, when I started using IDL (and later when I taught IDL), it was drilled into me that if you release a routine into the wild, you should use a namespace identifier to separate it from another user's routine which may have the same name.

I empathize with the problems that we've created in recent releases by tromping on established routines like LEGEND, COLORBAR and now BOXPLOT and TIMESTAMP, and others. However, I assert that since we (VIS) make IDL, we own the primary namespace. I think this is necessary to continue to move the language forward.

A possible workaround to allow you to call Martin Schultz's version of BOXPLOT would be to compile it in a startup file:

<https://groups.google.com/d/msg/comp.lang.idl-pvwave/6ibcyYf UXzA/WJW6eYZLP5YJ>

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