Subject: Your experience with other scientific languages?
Posted by Fabzi on Mon, 11 Nov 2013 17:11:22 GMT
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IDLers,

It is not my intention to start a troll-like discussion here. I am
reading this newsgroup since a couple of years now and I really
appreciate the friendly tone of this group (I followed some other groups
where arrogant people argued with other arrogant people... awful).
Having said this, I am wondering why we are never talking about other
languages. Is it to avoid trolls like me, or because EXELIS people also
read this group? (did I emphasize already how much I appreciate the
reactivity of Mark and Chris on this group? ;-))

To my point: I am starting a career in academia and my future employer
and colleagues don't use IDL. I could argue with my future boss and make
him pay for an IDL license. But I am seriously wondering if I want to do
this during my whole career (taking the risk to always be the only one
using IDL), and I am thinking about leaning Python. I've been searching
a bit for pro and cons, and since I am in the atmospheric sciences I
came to this website for example:
http://pyaos.johnny-lin.com/?p=544

Such a topical argument can last for ever, starting with the pros and
cons of open-source VS commercial softwares. So I will try to limit the
discussion to a couple of points:

- Map Projections: pyproj relies on the state-of-the art proj.4, and can
do Datum shifts (it seems). IDL's system is quite old and can't do datum
shifts.
- Graphics: I read in a VISualize presentation that IDL's objective was
to be "better than Python" in plotting (can't find the PDF anymore).
Does that mean that Python is really good at plotting?
- Statistics: my feelings says that Python probably has many more tools
"out-of-the-box" due to the larger community.
- Easiness of use: I am a Linux user so I am not afraid of installing
some packages, but I'm told that python is quite complicated in this
respect.

My question: did some of you have experience with python or similar
languages and if yes, what was your impressions *from the IDL user
perspective*? Any thoughts are appreciated!

Thanks,

Fabien