
Subject: Re: How does IDL do ...

Posted by [D.Kennedy](#) on Thu, 08 May 1997 07:00:00 GMT

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In article <ewilliams-0105970753190001@ppp6.subnet252.wesleyan.edu>, ewilliams@wesleyan.edu (Eric Williams) writes:

> Hi all,

>

> I am trying to put together a presentation for new IDL users that is a
> good introduction to using it for astronomical applications. One of the
> similar applications used in astro is IRAF. If anyone is familiar with IDL
> and IRAF would you be able to give me a rundown comparing the two,
> particularly when you might want to use one over the other. We have both
> apps in our working environment and I don't want to displace either, but I
> have never really used IRAF and I have a feeling that some things our
> users do in IRAF can be done faster in IDL. I already know that programing
> in IDL is much clearer.

Hmm I dunno , I'm a third year PhD student in Astronomy who uses both IRAF and IDL. I get the feeling that for data reduction using IDL would be re-inventing the wheel. Certainly when faced with reducing an echelle spectroscopic observing tape I'd reach for IRAF. Analysis may be a different thing depending on what sort of work you do however I certainly use IDL a lot for presenting results and working with results obtained from the spectra.

I see IRAF and IDL as totally different types of package but again I don't use IRAF for anything other than data reduction, at which it is very good.

Different tools for different jobs. If IRAF has a `_good_` task for it then why use IDL? In my case I started using IDL as I could not find software to do the (rather simple!) jobs I wanted with my radio data.

Oh, and you left out a job area - programming!

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