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Subject: IDL 8.4?

Posted by [rryan@stsci.edu](mailto:rryan@stsci.edu) on Wed, 15 Oct 2014 14:55:09 GMT

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I stumbled onto the "What's New in 8.4" page this morning...

<http://www.exelisvis.com/docs/WhatsNew.html>

I was under the notion that 8.4 wasn't coming out until November, but I guess it's out early. Anywho. It looks like they're really moving toward object-oriented techniques and a very pythonic experience, so I wanted to know if anyone has the inside track on some things:

(1) what is this lambda-inline function business? How is it different than `execute()`? Can it be used with the VM? What advantages does it have?

(2) they're adding static methods to all variables? does this mean variables must be deleted (a la `obj_destroy`)? Can variables still change types (like `x=0` & `x=x+2.0` & `help,x`)? What happens when I evoke a string-based method on a numerical type? How does the execution time for these new static methods compare to the "functional" or "procedural" versions? I guess, what advantage do you add here, other than complete loss of backwards compatibility (or forward, I don't know. I just know I can't use these methods and give to a friend who's still running <8.4).

(3) They've added a boolean datatype. Is it really boolean, or is it just a byte or int that is capped at 1? I mean, will intrinsically boolean things (which should've returned booleans from day 1 which return ints such as: `x = 1` or `t=keyword_set(SOME_VARIABLE)`) return booleans now? So now you could use `keyword_set()` to test if a keyword is set versus using `keyword_set` to see if the keyword is set to something non-zero (like it's always been).

I've got more questions, but these are the most troubling.

Russell

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