Subject: IDL vs. PV-WAVE
Posted by gpetty on Tue, 10 Jun 1997 07:00:00 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

This has got to be a novice FAQ, but I can't find a FAQ file that addresses it:

What is the difference between IDL and PV-WAVE? I had understood they were two competing packages that did similar things, but the name of this newsgroup (comp.lang.idl-pvwave), plus the fact that EVERYONE here is talking only about IDL (at least today), seems to suggest otherwise.

Anyway, I am looking at purchasing an IDL-like package for my research group and, assuming that PV-WAVE and IDL really are distinct creatures, would like to know what the crucial differences are. My applications will include the interactive graphic display and statistical analysis of scientific data sets and the preparation of publication quality figures on HP workstations. Particularly useful features would be the ability to project geographically referenced data as polygons, raster images, labeled contours, etc. on an arbitrary geographical map. Also, the ability to interactively label and edit plots and then produce PostScript output would be nice. Finally, the ability to read directly binary data in various formats directly from tape, rather than having to stage it to disk first, and to directly manipulate tape drives, would be nice. I have no idea how well either IDL or PV-WAVE matches these requirements.

After looking around this ng, I have to admit to being put off by a couple of seemingly recurring complaints about IDL: (1) persistent and difficult-to-work-around bugs in basic plotting routines -- e.g., missing grid lines, etc., and (2) the apparently steep learning curve, based on people's remarks about the need for expensive IDL training courses to learn widgets, etc. After years of struggling with similar problems with the NCAR Graphics package routines, I would really love to get my hands on a package that works dependably and which is easy for new users to figure out how to use from the hardcopy docs. This is especially true if I'm going to have to pay several $1000 for the package. Comments?

thanks

Grant

--
Grant W. Petty |Assoc. Prof., Atmospheric Science
Dept. of Earth & Atmospheric Sciences |Voice: (317)-494-2544
Purdue University |Fax: (317)-496-1210

West Lafayette, IN 47907-1397, USA |Email: gpetty@rain.atms.purdue.edu