
Subject: Re: The Secret Widget Manual and IDL V5
Posted by [Bill Sawchuck](#) on Tue, 10 Jun 1997 07:00:00 GMT
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Charles Martin <martin@uthscsa.edu> wrote in article
<martin-0906971210080001@biad16.uthscsa.edu>...

> Hi All,

>

> A long time ago when IDL first came out with widgets, I tried to write
> widget programs based on the standard documentation. I was able to get my
> widget programs to work, but they felt kludgy. I also decided that widget
> programing was much harder than it was worth so I mostly stopped writing
> widget code.

>

> Then as kind of a fluke I got a hold of the RSI manual called "Building
> Graphical User Interfaces in IDL: An Interactive Training Course". This
> manual was written by David Fanning and is the manual they give you if
you

> sign up for one of their \$\$\$ training courses. This manual was great. I
> read it in 1 day. I never bothered to download the examples from the ftp
> site. Now widget programing is simple and straight forward. I use widgets
> all the time.

>

> The fact that I was never even informed about the existense of this
manual

> really annoys me. It seems as if RSI expects you to take the training
> course if you want to do anything but the basics in IDL. Another thing
> that frustrates me is that even if the training course was free, for me
> reading the manual was enough. I would not want to waste time traveling
to

> and from the training site.

>

> So now IDL version 5 is here. Many fairly sophisticated users seem to be
> having trouble using objects. I read the objects manual and I got the
same

> feeling I got when I read the standard documentation on widgets. I wonder
> is there a training manual out there somewhere on IDL objects? If so is
> there a way to get that manual without taking a training course? Or does
> RSI expect us to fork over another \$1k to learn the secrets of the new
> features?

>

> Just Wondering,

>

> Charles Martin, PhD
> University of Texas

>

Charles,

I had the pleasure of attending the last widget training course which David taught at RSI in October 1996. It is also my opinion that his training manuals on IDL programming are second to none and should be required reading for *anyone* who is serious about IDL programming. I had had the same experience as you when taking my first stab at widget programming. After taking the course with David and reading the manual from cover to cover it was nothing short of amazing how the daunting task of writing large widget applications had suddenly and mysteriously become easy almost overnight.

Fortunately, I think we are all in luck. It is my understanding that David is currently working on an IDL book which is to include some coverage of the newly added object functionality which has been incorporated into IDL 5.0.

David, if you are out there (and I know you are), what is the status of this latest venture of yours? As I have said before, we are counting on you.

Anyone who has accessed this newsgroup has come to know David and the quality of his work. I believe anyone who has taken a course with him would agree he is an excellent teacher and story teller with a natural ability to get the point across with a sometimes unnatural love for IDL. I would urge anyone who is thinking about getting some extra help on IDL to get in touch with David as a first step. You will not be disappointed.

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p.s. The IDL training manuals can be ordered directly from RSI. An order form is included with the IDL 5.0 release.
