Posted by wlandsman on Wed, 23 Sep 2015 21:38:20 GMT
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I wanted to be able to launch any file (e.g. a .pdf or .pptx file) from IDL, in the same way that the OS or a browser does.   The program file_launch.pro at

http://idlastro.gsfc.nasa.gov/ftp/v84/file_launch.pro

will do this (e.g. IDL> file_launch,'test.xlsx').   It first tries to use the
Java desktop class
 https://docs.oracle.com/javase/tutorial/uiswing/misc/desktop .html
and if this fails, it spawns to the appropriate launch command for the oS.

```
 if !VERSION.OS_NAME EQ 'Mac OS X' then spawn,'open "'+ file +'" &' else begin
   case StrUpCase(!Version.OS_Family) OF
    'WINDOWS': spawn, 'start "" "'+ file +'"', /nowait
      'UNIX': spawn, 'xdg-open "'+ file +'" &'
        else: print, 'Unable to launch ' + file + ' automatically.'
   endcase
   endelse
```

Two questions:

1. Is there an existing method within IDL to do this?   I'd rather not pollute the IDL namespace
with a new program, if there is already a way to open files.

2. I would be interested to know if the program fails on some IDL Version/OS combination.   I've
only tested it on the 3 machines I have access to.

--Wayne