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Subject: Re: IDL or PV-WAVE?

Posted by [paul](#) on Thu, 20 Jun 1991 18:37:20 GMT

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> Which should we buy? Presumably PV-WAVE has more features, but are  
> they worth more money? Since they can now diverge, which would you bet  
> on long term?  
> Thanks.  
> Brian

It is amusing that this excellent question should have prompted the first flame throwing contest in this group.

As a long time IDL user, I agree completely with the eloquent statement of Dr. Landsman. Unfortunately, nobody in this group seems to have had sufficient experience with both IDL and PV-WAVE necessary to make a valid comparison. My experience with the new divergent PV-WAVE is limited to a single, two-hour hands-on demonstration of the product that was conducted by the PV-WAVE president himself. I offer this poor comparison in hopes that someone better informed than myself will follow-up with greater insight and correct my mistakes.

PV-WAVE is becoming two products. The older product is the established IDL-like plotting package, graphics package, and scientific language. The newer product is a Mac-like point-&-click package. Both the older product and the newer product run the IDL kernel. The newer product gives the user most of the capability of PV-WAVE, but without having to write a line of code. Everything from reading data in to graphic display is run with a point-&-click set of menu options. I was surprised by the flexibility of this package to manipulate and process data. The graphics were excellent, as one would expect.

If you buy the point-&-click package, you do not get the standard language. As good as it is, there is no way the point-&-click package can be as flexible as the standard IDL/PV-WAVE language. The point-&-click package is therefore aimed at people who do not want to write code, but want more flexibility than standard reduction packages offer. It remains to be seen how large a market this product will generate.

I enjoy both the simplicity and the flexibility of the IDL language, so I am prepared to become an old timer who still writes code.

paul

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