Subject: Re: Making help for your own functions & procedures Posted by knight on Fri, 16 Apr 1993 22:17:41 GMT

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A recent thread (repeated below) concerns making help for your own functions. Here's what I do. On all functions and procedures I include a keyword help, which, when set, triggers doc library to print the header. For example,

IDL> legend,/help

% Compiled module: LEGEND.

% Compiled module: DOC LIBRARY.

% Compiled module: DL UNIX.

---- Documentation for /usr/local/idl/lib/local/legend.pro ----

Name:

legend

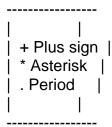
Purpose:

This procedure makes a legend for a plot. The legend can contain a mixture of symbols, linestyles, Hershey characters (vectorfont), and filled polygons (usersym).

Examples:

The call:

legend,['Plus sign','Asterisk','Period'],psym=[1,2,3] produces:



etc.

Placing an example just after the purpose gives a good oveview of the routine on the first page of the doc_library output, so the user can exit from IDL's MORE right away.

The code is simple. All that is needed in the procedure is a single line. For example,

```
pro legend, help=help, items, linestyle=linestyle, psym=psym ...
 ====>> HELP
on_error,2
if keyword_set(help) then begin & doc_library, 'legend' & return & endif
```

The method is simple, gives straightforward help, and promotes the inclusion of headers in all routines.

Fred

In article <thompson.734709026@serts.gsfc.nasa.gov>, thompson@serts.gsfc.nasa.gov (William Thompson) writes: l> deutsch@orac.stsci.edu writes: |> |> >In article <thompson.734294880@serts.gsfc.nasa.gov>, thompson@serts.gsfc.nasa.gov (William Thompson) writes: |> >> kaij@dutnsi2.tudelft.nl (Roland Kaijen) writes: |> >> |> >>>n IDL 3.0.1 for WINDOWS there is very good online help-tool. Unfortunatly |> >>>only the functions & procedures know by the makers of IDL are in this |> >>help-tool: there are however frequently used functions & procedures written |> >>>by others that we would like to a **|> >>** >> Use the routine MK_LIBRARY_HELP in the IDL User's Library. |> >> |> >> Bill Thompson |> > This allows one to create the .HELP files, but what if you are not allowed >> to add to the IDL_DIR/help directory? e.g. on a cluster where you are not |> >the main user of IDL, how can I add .HELP entries (for use with ?) > for me to use, but not for everyone to have to see. Can I set something >>somewhere to not only look in the IDL distribution HELP directory, but also >>one of my own (or one which applies to a certain package, etc.) |> 1> > The question mark command in IDL actually calls a routine called MAN_PROC. At > one point we had editted man_proc.pro to do exactly what you're talking about, > but then RSI came out with the widgetized version of "?" and we gave up. |> I> Nowadays we depend on another routine called DOC which allows us to browse > through the directories in !PATH, and to extract the documentation from it. |> It's basically a user-friendly front-end to DOC LIBRARY. The software works > best on a widgets platform such as X-windows or Microsoft Windows, but there's > also a capability of using it on less sophisticated platforms. If you want > this software, please E-mail me and I'll tell you how to get it. |> > If you have widgets available to you (either X-windows or I believe now |> Microsoft Windows) you can use a routine called XDL, which does more-or-less > the same thing as DOC, although somewhat differently. XDL should be supplied > with the IDL distribution. |> |> Bill Thompson

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