
Subject: Woes of Software Distribution, Re: Something else

Posted by [davidf](#) on Tue, 16 Nov 1999 08:00:00 GMT

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Craig Markwardt (craigmnet@cow.physics.wisc.edu) writes:

- > After looking at my download logs I realized that people just weren't
- > getting the additional required programs for things like PLOTIMAGE.
- > Since then I've made a concerted effort to keep the programs
- > self-contained, which usually means including a few small functions or
- > subroutines.

I mean this in the very nicest possible way, but people are hopeless. Present company excluded, of course. :-)

I have the same problem with my library. If you make programs that are **designed** to work together, then you have to get all of them. If you try to put a small utility routine (CMCongrid is a good example) in all the dependent routines, then it is virtually impossible to make a change to the utility routine, because you can't find all the copies.

I try to strike a balance. I put some utility routines in every program. For example, Normalize is in **every** object graphics program I write because I can't imagine writing a program without it and I'm pretty sure it's not going to change, primarily because I can never figure out exactly how it works. :-)

I've been fooling around with object inheritance this week and I can tell you the problem only gets worse. **Way** worse! I've got that new XWindow thing in parts scattered all over the office. It feels like the time I convinced myself I could rebuild the engine on my ol' VW Beetle. Let's just say I used the ol' shanks mare for getting around a heck of a lot longer than I thought I was going to. And the mechanic wasn't too pleased when I dropped off the box of loose parts, either. :-(

I have more problems with an RSI-supplied program like Congrid. I mean I **believe** that everybody should be using your version (or one of the fixed versions I have around here, at least), but I feel like I can't force it on anyone. (Actually, I do force it on you in one of my more popular programs, but I do so

unashamedly because I simply fixed a bug that caused my program to report a spurious error condition.)

In any case, the only real way to get people to download and use your good programs is to charge for them. This also consoles you when you are sitting in front of the computer late at night fixing bugs sent in by someone who has erroneously assumed that because you have a web page you don't have a life.

Cheers,

David

P.S. Unfortunately, he assumed right. :-(

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