
Subject: Re: GUI Builder or lack of!
Posted by [davidf](#) on Mon, 20 Dec 1999 08:00:00 GMT
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Dave Brennan (9147261b@clinmed.gla.ac.uk) writes:

> I was wondering what other newsgroup members think about the lack of GUI
> builder on platforms apart from window systems.

You should count your blessings. :-)

Cheers,

David

P.S. Believe me, this is something you only **think** you want.
It's a common problem this time of year. (At least it is
around my household.)

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.
Fanning Software Consulting
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Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>
Toll-Free IDL Book Orders: 1-888-461-0155

Subject: Re: GUI Builder or lack of!
Posted by [davidf](#) on Tue, 21 Dec 1999 08:00:00 GMT
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Craig Markwardt (craigmnet@cow.physics.wisc.edu) writes:

> Sometimes you make it sound like we're **not** paying multi-hundreds to
> multi-thousands of dollars for IDL. Yearly even.

Now I didn't make any comment at all about whether our
maintenance dollars are well spent. (But let's just say
I'm **very** interested in that new HotDispatch service
where you post your question and how much you would
be willing to pay for the answer. I like the idea of
letting the market decide how much something is worth. :-)

I'm just saying that some things sound better in theory
than they actually turn out to be in practice. I'm 100%
behind RSI on this one. Converting the GUI Builder to run on
all platforms would be a terrible waste of resources.

- > While I'm in the camp that roles their own user interface by hand
- > (when needed), I can totally understand and sympathize with the
- > frustration over OS favoritism that was described.

Absolutely. But I'm realistic enough to know that some operating systems are more equal than others just by virtue of the number of licenses running on them.

Cheers,

David

P.S. Interestingly, a friend of mine and I had a real application builder (as opposed to a GUI-builder) working on multiple platforms about a year ago. But we got to the stage where we had to decide if there was a market for it or not. After shopping it around to quite a few people, none of whom were reaching for their wallets, as I recall, we decided that there was a very good chance we would sink a lot of time and money into a product no one really wanted to buy. I'm sure RSI has probably conducted their own feasibility study with similar results.

--

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Subject: Re: GUI Builder or lack of!

Posted by [Craig Markwardt](#) on Tue, 21 Dec 1999 08:00:00 GMT

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davidf@dfanning.com (David Fanning) writes:

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- >
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- > You should count your blessings. :-)
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Hey David--

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While I'm in the camp that roles their own user interface by hand (when needed), I can totally understand and sympathize with the frustration over OS favoritism that was described.

Craig

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Craig B. Markwardt, Ph.D. EMAIL: craigmnet@cow.physics.wisc.edu
Astrophysics, IDL, Finance, Derivatives | Remove "net" for better response

Subject: Re: GUI Builder or lack of!
Posted by [davidf](#) on Tue, 21 Dec 1999 08:00:00 GMT
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Dave Brennan (9147261b@clinmed.gla.ac.uk) writes:

- > I can understand from a seasoned programmers point of view why GUI builders
- > would seem ugly and be more of a hiderence than a help. However, working in a
- > hospital I have only a limited time to spend programing in IDL (and other
- > languages too), as I have other commitments. The GUIbuilder would at least
- > allow simple things to be programmed quickly with a front end the
- > radiologists could relate to. (Have to be very user friendly!)

For a couple of hundred dollars (a fraction of what you are paying for IDL maintenance, by the way) you could have someone write you a widget template that *looked* like a radiology thingy and was basic enough to allow you to do 80 percent of the simple things you are going to want to do with it. It would be easy to use, simple to modify and extend, have automatic file output, etc., etc. (Come to think of it, you could steal just about any widget program on my web page and have pretty much the same thing.) You would never miss the widget builder again. :-)

- > Anyway there is only one thing that I ask for, from Santa,
- >
- > IDL equality for all!

Hard to argue with that. My own list has only one item: consistent color handling on all IDL-supported

platforms. :-)

Cheers,

David

--

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Subject: Re: GUI Builder or lack of!

Posted by [Dave Brennan](#) on Tue, 21 Dec 1999 08:00:00 GMT

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David Fanning wrote:

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allow simple things to be programmed quickly with a front end the radiologists could relate to. (Have to be very user friendly!)

Michael, I too am an impurist in programming terms. Therefore, your safe from the flames!

Anyway there is only one thing that I ask for, from Santa,

IDL equality for all!

Dave Brennan

Subject: Re: GUI Builder or lack of!

Posted by [Michael Asten](#) on Tue, 21 Dec 1999 08:00:00 GMT

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I agree that there should be a GuiBuilder for all systems, since it saves considerable time for many users. (Even the much maligned WIDED builder from idl4.x - included in idl5.2 under 'obsolete routines, and probably useable on unix - is better than no guibuilder at all). However I can see why RSI might be wary of committing (finite) resources to other platforms until positive feedback is received from windows users. Unfortunately, many windows rsi programmers are less than complimentary about the GuiBuilder - a fact which surprises me somewhat. GuiBuilder-generated code is of course not pretty to look at (nor is assembly code when generated by a fortran compiler!) but if generated properly it calls user-written routines and does not (and should not) require user editing. It sure beats sweating over gui programming for a user like me.

In defence of RSIs present policy, I wonder whether it is really difficult to use a GuiBuilder on a PC and transport the resulting idl code to a unix box. PCs litter offices like stickytape dispensers nowadays, and low-end pentium/win95 computers sufficient for basic idl programming are being thrown out even by primary schools. Maybe you unix-users should be leaning on RSI to give you a complimentary PC licence with the unix licence, just so they dont have to develop the GuiBuilder on unix.

I also believe RSI share some of the blame for a slow takeup of the GuiBuilder, due to the limited documentation/tutorials provided in idl5.2. It would be great if one or two of our top-gun idl programmers exercised the GuiBuilder and distilled out a few lessons in correct useage - their communication skills are generally better than RSIs documentation writers, but somehow the GuiBuilder concept does not win their favor.

Perhaps if a few more users gave positive feedback to RSI on the GuiBuilder, RSI would be more inclined to make it available on other platforms.

You can see I am an impurist where programming is concerned. If am the only such person in the world, then -
"Let the flaming begin..."

Regards,
Michael Asten

Dave Brennan wrote:

> Hi,
>
> I was wondering what other newsgroup members think about the lack of GUI
> builder on platforms apart from window systems.
>
> We have Unix workstations for which the licenses are more expensive and
> yet even though we pay more we get less.
>
> Is this an RSI policy?
>
> In a previous communication with RSI about this subject I was told,
>
> "It was easier to impliment the GUI builder in windows and that is why
> it hasn't been ported to other platforms"
>
> Is this true? Even if it is, it surely RSI should be working a little
> harder in porting it to other platforms!
>
> It alsmost feels like I have a student version of IDL. Maybey I should
> be paying student rates.....
>
> Any comments?
>
> Cheers
>
> Dave Brennan
