
Subject: Re: Top 10 for old farts - The place of object graphics in IDL

Posted by [Pete Riley](#) on Mon, 31 Jul 2000 07:00:00 GMT

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Hey David,

Nice story. So was RSI's investment in the 'artist-formally-known-as-spyglass' not a hint of their attempt to buy their way into OG? Integrating Plot, transform, and Dicer would make nice additions to their tools. And, since they were originally compiled to run on most platforms (unix, mac, pc), it might not involve too much reworking.

-Pete

David Fanning <davidf@dfanning.com> wrote in message
news:MPG.13eb4d1b4b64e350989b77@news.frii.com...

> Joseph B. Gurman (gurman@gsfc.nasa.gov) writes:

>

>> So I still propose that as long as there are lower-priced,
>> full-featured student licenses, there should be lower-priced,
>> fewer-featured research associates' licenses. The "pro" license can
>> include all the wonderful features those with time to use them
>> efficiently want.

>>

>> Seriously (once again), it would be nice to be able to pay for a
>> base license, and add on, at extra cost:

>>

>> 1. objects

>>

>> 2. QuickTime support (per codec)

>>

>> 3. other features requiring RSI to pay license fees (GIF?)

>

> I suppose it is inevitable, as IDL grows ever larger, that
> we begin to pay for add-ons. RSI has already taken this
> course with DataMiner and the Wavelet Toolkit. But I am
> dead set against this proposal, Joe.

>

> First of all, objects are integral to the programming
> language. There will always be a few of us old scientists
> who find it more pleasurable to write programs than to
> spend yet one more bleary-eyed night peering through
> the peep-hole of a telescope. (Maybe this is all done
> through a computer with IDL programs these days, for all
> I know.) It would be a shame if people couldn't use the
> programs we write.

>

> In fact, I haven't written a program for a client in the
> past year that hasn't included at least one object,
> and sometimes it's easier to write the whole thing as
> an object. PSCONFIG, a program on my web page that is
> widely downloaded and praised by people who use it, is
> an object program, although I would guess 95% of the
> people who use it don't know that. Certainly most of
> the programs I add to my library in the future will
> be object programs, although I'm not fool enough to
> tell anyone that, since just the word itself is enough
> to send shivers up the backs of many IDL users. :-)
>
> I've frankly pretty much given up the idea of writing
> an object book because (1) it is so damn hard to write
> a book, and (2) after going to all that trouble I thought
> only about a dozen people would buy it. (And I will hear
> from all 12 today, probably, pleading with me to reconsider,
> so desperate is the need for decent documentation.)
>
> The lack of good instruction is probably what is holding
> the adoption of objects back. I know you say you don't
> need them. The people in my course last week were adamant
> that they didn't need to know any widget programming, too.
> But in the end all they cared about was widget programming
> and increased interactivity with their data. I submit that
> objects have the same ability to transform how we work
> with our data.
>
> Yes, there is more up-front cost. And I'm completely
> sympathetic with those scientists who feel they don't
> have time to figure it out. If objects are unfamiliar
> to you, it is just about impossible to learn about them
> from the material that RSI gives you. But in the end
> they do more for your science than what you are using
> now. That must be the bottom line. Someday, inevitably,
> you are going to be working with objects. Maybe you
> won't write them. But you sure as heck don't want to
> pay extra for them, either.
>
> Cheers,
>
> David
>
> --
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