Subject: Re: taking the widget plunge. help
Posted by davidf on Wed, 06 Sep 2000 20:26:10 GMT
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Peter Brooker (ra5589@email.sps.mot.com) writes:

> I need to write a program to learn how easy/hard IDL widgets are to
> use. I figure that a starting point would be a well documented simple
> program that demostrates how they are to use.
>
> Any suggestions?

I've completely re-written the IDL programming
chapters of my book for the 2nd Edition, which is
due out in October. This includes, in particular,
all the widget programming material. You might
want to try the example widget program I wrote
for this book. It is named Histo_GUI and you
can find it here:

   ftp://ftp.dfanning.com/pub/dfanning/outgoing/coyote2nd/histo _gui.pro

That's all you will need if you just want to
study how a program is written. If you want to
run the program, you will need other programs
in the Coyote library. I would just download
all the programs in the coyote2nd directory.
I think all the programs you need are there,
although I haven't done the final run-through
to be absolutely certain. You will definitely
need these files:

   colorbar.pro
   error_message.pro
   fsc_droplist.pro
   fsc_fileselect.pro
   fsc_inputfield.pro
   fsc_plotwindow.pro
   fsc_ps_config__define.pro
   getcolor.pro
   histoimage.pro
   loaddata.pro
   openimage.pro
   pickcolorname.pro
   psconfig.pro
   pswindow.pro
   tvimage.pro

If you need more explanation (other than what appears
in the program comments), you can always read the book. :-)

Best Regards,

David

P.S. Let's just say I wouldn't be using too many programs
in the lib directory as examples. :-(
--
David Fanning, Ph.D.
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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: taking the widget plunge. help
Posted by Martin Schultz on Thu, 07 Sep 2000 07:51:24 GMT
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Peter Brooker wrote:
>
> I need to write a program to learn how easy/hard IDL widgets are to
> use. I figure that a starting point would be a well documented simple
> program that demostrates how they are to use.
>
> Any suggestions?
>
> thanks-Peter Brooker

Ohh! *Using* widgets is really easy, it's the making that sometimes
causes a little more trouble ;-)

Cheers,
Martin

--
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Subject: Re: taking the widget plunge. help
Posted by promashkin on Thu, 07 Sep 2000 15:02:21 GMT

I have a different problem. It is so much fun to write them that I am
beginning to like that better than using them :-)
Cheers,
Pavel

Martin Schultz wrote:

>
> Ohh! *Using* widgets is really easy, it's the making that sometimes
> causes a little more trouble ;-)
>
> Cheers,
> Martin*

Subject: Re: taking the widget plunge. help
Posted by davidf on Thu, 07 Sep 2000 15:26:55 GMT

Pavel Romashkin (promashkin@cmdl.noaa.gov) writes:

> I have a different problem. It is so much fun to write them that I am
> beginning to like that better than using them :-)

This, in a nutshell, is *exactly* the problem with objects.
And don't even get me started on documentation, in which
you have to document each and every method in addition to
the usual rigamarole. And, of course, they are so much
fun to write that you have about 50 methods. Sigh...

I usually just give up and console myself with the thought
that at least *my* programs are really cool. Even if no one
else (as a result of my sloth) can figure out how they work. :-(

Cheers,

David

P.S. Let's just say I spent a couple of days writing
documentation for FSC_PSConfig, *the* best program I've
ever written, and no one downloads it or uses it. You just
figure after a while, what's the point?

--
David Fanning, Ph.D.

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Subject: Re: taking the widget plunge. help
Posted by Martin Schultz on Fri, 08 Sep 2000 08:43:24 GMT

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David Fanning wrote:
>
>
>
> P.S. Let's just say I spent a couple of days writing
> documentation for FSC_PSConfig, *the* best program I've
> ever written, and no one downloads it or uses it. You just
> figure after a while, what's the point?
>

Oh, don't be so disappointed! I would say, you are just way ahead of
time! Wait until a few more people catch up with the niceties of
objects, and I am sure you will see your psconfig being used more and
more.
Also, this probably has to do with the way a lot of code gets written:
copy and paste. So, most people will have some sort of psopen and
psclose in their programs already, and they just copy it into their
new programs without thinking how it could be improved. And when they
really need to produce a beautifully scaled postscript file, it's
usually with the boss standing right behind them, so they wouldn't
dare to try out something new but rather fiddle with the device
keywords manually 6-10 times.

Cheer(s|up),
Martin

--
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Subject: Re: taking the widget plunge. help
Posted by John-David T. Smith on Mon, 11 Sep 2000 23:25:11 GMT
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> P.S. Let's just say I spent a couple of days writing
> documentation for FSC_PSConfig, *the* best program I've
> ever written, and no one downloads it or uses it. You just
> figure after a while, what's the point?

I took this as a friendly reminder to check out your new stuff, and I was
frankly amazed at how much work you'd put into the documentation. Really an
astounding effort. I will try to integrate FSC_PSConfig into some of my
programs around here.

One note which I think is instructive. You include a section on customization
where you outline how to directly modify your source to add personal or
company-wide set-up lists. This is a very useful feature, but I think you're
going to cause yourself and potential users grief here. It's a *perfect* place
to flex our object oriented muscles. The problem will be that in a year you'll
think of a great way to redesign it, or maybe RSI makes some changes to device
which prompt a rewrite. Then, either all the users who have made their own
modifications will be out of luck, or you'll be contrained in what kind of
updates you can do. It is exactly these types of situations that scream out for
some sort of object relationship. If, rather than giving direction on how to
change your code, you gave a simple example of INHERIT'ing your class, and
chaining to its setup code, you could fully preserve "forward compatibility" --
i.e. drop-in replacement of your updated code.

Or, since in this case the local setup changes are data-only (no fundamental
method changes), you could simply provide access to an internally growable list
of setups. Inheritance is not even really required.

 I haven't looked closely, but a method which allows you to add setup lists
(e.g. self->AddSetup,"Company Viewgraph",/EUROPEAN, FontNameSet="Helvetica"),
would seem to do the trick. This might be called automatically in Init with all
the built-in defaults. A user could INHERIT it, override and chain to AddSetup
for a fully internal solution, or they could use a compound relationship and add
the setups "from the outside" in whatever wrapper routine (or object) they
use.

The details of how set-ups are stored, manipulated, etc., would be hidden, only
the published interface of AddSetup need remain the same (or backwards
compatible anyway... nothing to stop you adding new keywords as new features
become available).

Anyway, it's just a thought. Perhaps you're afraid of scaring off potential
users with objects. You shouldn't be. It's good for them.

JD

--
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