
Subject: IDL 5.4 Stability

Posted by [davidf](#) on Mon, 06 Nov 2000 08:00:00 GMT

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Hi Folks,

Has anyone had any problems with IDL 5.4 stability? I've managed to completely crash it three times in the past couple of weeks. It's odd, because I don't recall IDL 5.3.1 *ever* crashing on my Windows NT machine in all the times I've used it.

Twice I was doing something stupid, I'm sure. But once it crashed running one of my programs on my web page. (This was just before a lecture, so I didn't follow up and now I can't even remember what program I was running. I switched to IDL 5.3.1 for the lecture.)

I'm just curious if others have experienced something similar.

Cheers,

David

P.S. Please, I am *NOT* trying to start a flame war here. I'm just beginning to think I may have installed something incorrectly. At this point, I'm more inclined to think this is my problem (or, more likely, a Windows problem) rather than IDL's. :-)

--

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: IDL 5.4 Stability

Posted by [Mark Hadfield](#) on Thu, 09 Nov 2000 02:27:52 GMT

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"Peter Suetterlin" <pit@hst33127.phys.uu.nl> wrote in message
news:8ubqbr\$2u58\$1@pukkie.phys.uu.nl...

> "Pavel A. Romashkin" <pavel.romashkin@noaa.gov> writes:

>

>> This entire thread sounds extremely discouraging. I am sure my 5.3

>> works just fine, and does all I want.
>
> That's why I'm still using 4.0.1 at home.... :-)

And it does all you want? You must be easy to please!

Mark Hadfield
m.hadfield@niwa.cri.nz <http://katipo.niwa.cri.nz/~hadfield/>
National Institute for Water and Atmospheric Research
PO Box 14-901, Wellington, New Zealand

Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 Stability
Posted by [pit](#) on Thu, 09 Nov 2000 08:00:00 GMT
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"Mark Hadfield" <m.hadfield@niwa.cri.nz> writes:

>> That's why I'm still using 4.0.1 at home.... :-)
>
> And it does all you want? You must be easy to please!

Indeed, it does.

Peter

--

~~~~~  
~~~~~  
Dr. Peter "Pit" Suetterlin <http://www.astro.uu.nl/~suetter>
Sterrenkundig Instituut Utrecht
Tel.: +31 (0)30 253 5225 P.Suetterlin@astro.uu.nl

Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 Stability
Posted by [Liam E. Gumley](#) on Fri, 10 Nov 2000 08:00:00 GMT
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Med Bennett wrote:

> Well, I'm still using 5.0.2, circa mid 1997. It's hard to know what the
> "best" version for one's particular feature needs and stability is. Maybe we
> should have a vote as to what the best version of IDL is, taking into account
> both features and stability. Since I haven't (I hate to admit it) gotten into
> object graphics yet, I don't consider that functionality to be important
> right now.

My experience with writing IMDISP (<http://cimss.ssec.wisc.edu/~gumley/imdisp.html>) taught me it can be frustrating when you try to support multiple versions of IDL (IMDISP supports IDL 5.0-5.4). Little things keep creeping in which make it harder to write version-independent code. For example, the SIZE function keywords `n_dimensions`, `dimensions`, `type`, `tname`, and `n_elements` introduced in IDL 5.2 make it much easier to determine array information. Decomposed color handling is also much improved in IDL 5.2, as is the PRINTER device support. Also, once I made the switch to square-bracket array syntax, I could never go back to the pre-5.0 parentheses.

For my work-related programming, which is mostly done on UNIX boxes, I use IDL 5.3 routinely and find it to be reliable, stable, and worry-free. The transition from IDL 5.1 to 5.2 to 5.3 over the last few years was painless AFAIK for all IDL users on these systems. I have installed IDL 5.4 on a couple of NT PCs and it works fine, but we need to decide how to handle GIF images before we can upgrade our UNIX systems to 5.4.

Cheers,
Liam.
<http://cimss.ssec.wisc.edu/~gumley>

Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 Stability
Posted by [davidf](#) on Fri, 10 Nov 2000 08:00:00 GMT
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Med Bennett (mbennett@indra.com) writes:

> Well, I'm still using 5.0.2, circa mid 1997. It's hard to know what the
> "best" version for one's particular feature needs and stability is. Maybe we
> should have a vote as to what the best version of IDL is, taking into account
> both features and stability. Since I haven't (I hate to admit it) gotten into
> object graphics yet, I don't consider that functionality to be important
> right now.

I had the pleasure of seeing the circa 1988 IDL DOS PC (Alpha) version running yesterday. Still plugging away, acquiring data from 7 pin-hole cameras talking pictures of the heart. (The gated blood pool images of the heart distributed with IDL came from these early research results, I believe.)

I'd have to vote for that as the most stable alpha version of IDL of all time. :-)

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

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Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 Stability

Posted by [Med Bennett](#) on Fri, 10 Nov 2000 08:00:00 GMT

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LC's No-Spam Newsreading account wrote:

>>>> That's why I'm still using 4.0.1 at home.... :-)

>>> And it does all you want? You must be easy to please!

>> Indeed, it does.

>

> Me too. I'm still on 4.0 on a DU 3.2 system which has reasons to stay
> that way. I'd like a stable cheap language.

>

> I would be more agreeable to pay cheaper licenses (for instance linked to
> hours of usage, and "rechargeable") than the current floating licenses,
> and a small upgrade/maintenance charge for the rare cases (one is
> approaching) when I have to change the hostid in the license server file
> because I write off an old workstation. I'm really not interested in
> getting CDs of "upgraded" versions which give me lots of GUI oriented
> stuff I do not need, or changes which can be annoying (like the [] stuff
> for arrays) or worsened performance (our license server is tied to 5.1
> because 5.3 does not support OPTIONS.DAT, and I would carefully avoid to
> go to 5.4 since it does not write GIFs anymore).

>

> --

> -----

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> avoid unwanted spam. Any mail returning to this address will be rejected.
> Users can disclose their e-mail address in the article if they wish so.

Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 Stability

Posted by [LC's No-Spam Newsread](#) on Fri, 10 Nov 2000 08:00:00 GMT

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--

nospam@ifctr.mi.cnr.it is a newsreading account used by more persons to avoid unwanted spam. Any mail returning to this address will be rejected. Users can disclose their e-mail address in the article if they wish so.

Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 Stability

Posted by [Nick Bower](#) on Sat, 11 Nov 2000 17:15:14 GMT

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This thread seems to raise the question about a community beta testing procedure for IDL. Is there one? I've seen at least 2 very serious problems in this thread that surely would be weeded out with such program.

nick

Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 Stability

Posted by [noymer](#) on Sun, 12 Nov 2000 08:00:00 GMT

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I have not used 5.4, but don't forget what a major pain it must be to come out with software that runs on Win, Mac, VMS, and N flavors of Unix.

To quote Danny Thorpe of Borland (you remember Turbo Pascal, don't you?):

"Proper testing of Win32 applications today should include testing on the following distinct platforms: 'virgin' Windows 95, Windows 95 OSR2, Windows 95 with IE4, Windows 95 with IE5, Windows 95 with DCOM, Windows 98, Windows 98 Second Edition, Windows 98 with IE5, Windows NT 4.0 SP3, Windows NT 4.0 with IE5, and Windows 2000"

And he forgot Windows ME...

I don't know if the Win/IE interactions are relevant to IDL, but it's still a lot of work.

Platform-specific instability is less of an indictment than overall instability.

-- Andrew

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Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 Stability
Posted by [Lyn Doose](#) on Sun, 12 Nov 2000 08:00:00 GMT
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Based on a very limited number of uses, I agree that IDL 5.4 on Windows NT seems unstable. I haven't documented the circumstances, but I kind of resent being a beta tester. For now I'm back to 5.2.

> Has anyone had any problems with IDL 5.4 stability? I've
> managed to completely crash it three times in the past
> couple of weeks. It's odd, because I don't recall
> IDL 5.3.1 *ever* crashing on my Windows NT machine in
> all the times I've used it.

Lyn Doose

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Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 Stability

Posted by [Mark Hadfield](#) on Sun, 12 Nov 2000 21:23:36 GMT

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"Lyn Doose" <ldoose@dakotacom.net> wrote in message
news:3a0f0185_1@corp.newsfeeds.com...

> Based on a very limited number of uses, I agree that IDL 5.4 on
> Windows NT seems unstable. I haven't documented the circumstances,
> but I kind of resent being a beta tester.

I think that's a little unfair. There *was* a beta test programme for IDL 5.4. I don't know if it revealed any stability problems on Windows--I know I didn't encounter any.

For what it's worth, I have found 5.4 (beta & final) more stable than 5.3.1 (this is on NT4 + SP5). Version 5.3.1 used to crash from time to time, usually after an attempt to reset an IDL session, but to the best of my recollection version 5.4 hasn't. I haven't bothered to mention this previously in this thread, because when you say "this application crashes on my machine" it's not very helpful for others to say "it doesn't on mine". But I the general opinion that 5.4 is less stable than 5.3.1 is not yet proven, and I think the assertion that RSI is guilty of not testing its products is unfair.

Reading over that last sentence I am reminded of the time when a version of IDL came out with its netCDF support (or was it CDF?) completely broken on Windows. Now *that* was an example of inadequate testing. The email I wrote to RSI sizzled with barely concealed fury. Still, they sent me a T shirt to calm me down, so I guess it wasn't all bad.

Mark Hadfield
m.hadfield@niwa.cri.nz <http://katipo.niwa.cri.nz/~hadfield/>
National Institute for Water and Atmospheric Research
PO Box 14-901, Wellington, New Zealand

Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 Stability

Posted by [Nick Bower](#) on Mon, 13 Nov 2000 08:00:00 GMT

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Nick Bower wrote:

> This thread seems to raise the question about a community beta testing

> procedure for IDL. Is there one? I've seen at least 2 very serious
> problems in this thread that surely would be weeded out with such
> program.
>
> nick

to the nice guy that emailed me with details of the existing beta test
program, i accidentally deleted your mail while using a crappy webmail
interface that didn't have a trashcan. here's just a thanks because i
couldn't reply.

nick

Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 Stability

Posted by [Lyn Doose](#) on Thu, 16 Nov 2000 08:00:00 GMT

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> Windows. Now *that* was an example of inadequate testing. The email I
wrote
> to RSI sizzled with barely concealed fury. Still, they sent me a T shirt
to
> calm me down, so I guess it wasn't all bad.

Gee, you want copies of my Dr. Watson logs. RSI doesn't. They want me to boil the problem down to its "essential failing code" and send it to them. Maybe after enough hours of work on this, I'd get a T shirt too. Wheee!

Lyn Doose

Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 Stability

Posted by [noymer](#) on Fri, 17 Nov 2000 02:09:17 GMT

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In article <8v1rqk\$6e4\$1@news.ccit.arizona.edu>,

"Lyn Doose" <ldoose@lpl.arizona.edu> wrote:

>

> Gee, you want copies of my Dr. Watson logs. RSI doesn't.

IIRC, Dr. Watson logs are not very useful.

Now, if they didn't want my core dump, I'd be peeved. ;-)

-- Andrew

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Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 Stability

Posted by [Lyn Doose](#) on Sat, 18 Nov 2000 08:00:00 GMT

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There certainly are real problems with IDL 5.4 under NT. I have no idea how wide spread they are; in my case I'm not doing anything exotic. I am currently working with RSI to resolve a problem with code that runs fine under 5.2, throws a Dr. Watson every time under 5.4, but then runs fine if a breakpoint is inserted. I'll let you know the outcome.

Lyn Doose

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