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Subject: IDL 5.4 and gifs

Posted by [Craig Markwardt](#) on Fri, 19 Jan 2001 21:38:52 GMT

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I was visiting someone with IDL 5.4 on Linux today. I mentioned the lack of GIF support, and my friend was surprised. We confirmed that when we tried to open a GIF, we got an error message. However there is an idl\_gif.so library file, and WRITE\_GIF, READ\_GIF, etc still exists as procedures in the standard library.

We tried the simple experiment of replacing the IDL 5.4 idl\_gif.so library and DLM files with the ones from IDL 5.3.

It worked! We were able at least to read old GIFs into IDL with no problem. I didn't try writing any GIFs however.

Has anybody else tried this and got it to work? For previous purchasers of IDL, this at least is a good sign. :-)

Craig

--

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Craig B. Markwardt, Ph.D.      EMAIL: [craigmnet@cow.physics.wisc.edu](mailto:craigmnet@cow.physics.wisc.edu)  
Astrophysics, IDL, Finance, Derivatives | Remove "net" for better response  
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Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 and gifs

Posted by [R.Bauer](#) on Mon, 22 Jan 2001 16:24:21 GMT

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Craig Markwardt wrote:

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> lack of GIF support, and my friend was surprised. We confirmed that  
> when we tried to open a GIF, we got an error message. However there  
> is an idl\_gif.so library file, and WRITE\_GIF, READ\_GIF, etc still  
> exists as procedures in the standard library.  
>  
> We tried the simple experiment of replacing the IDL 5.4 idl\_gif.so  
> library and DLM files with the ones from IDL 5.3.

You will get the same result if you add it to your working directory.  
And start idl with a routine from that. This makes testing easier.  
After reading Ronns book I should have realized that's this will work  
but I don't tried.

What's are the licenses saying about this. Of course if you already have written your own DLM you are allowed to add them to each IDL Version.

But this is a bit different from mixing two Versions of two commercial products.

Till now gif is available for past idl5.3 users.  
Are there any ideas how much it will costs?

regards  
Reimar

--

Reimar Bauer

Institut fuer Stratosphaerische Chemie (ICG-1)  
Forschungszentrum Juelich  
email: R.Bauer@fz-juelich.de

=====  
a IDL library at ForschungsZentrum Jülich  
[http://www.fz-juelich.de/icg/icg1/idl\\_icglib/idl\\_lib\\_intro.html](http://www.fz-juelich.de/icg/icg1/idl_icglib/idl_lib_intro.html)

<http://www.fz-juelich.de/zb/text/publikation/juel3786.html>

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Subject: Re: HOW  
Posted by [Mark Chan](#) on Thu, 25 Jan 2001 03:15:53 GMT  
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I am not a lawyer!

Could someone please explain to me what 'replacing the IDL 5.4 IDL\_gif.so library and DLM files with the ones from IDL 5.3' means?

I have never done anything like this before. Will like to learn this more.

I have 5.4 and am using 5.3 because of this gif problem. For the time being I don't need to use this trick but don't mind knowing more.

Thanks,  
Mark Chan

"Craig Markwardt" <craigmnet@cow.physics.wisc.edu> wrote in message  
news:ony9w79q8j.fsf@cow.physics.wisc.edu...

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

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Subject: Re: HOW  
Posted by [davidf](#) on Thu, 25 Jan 2001 03:53:21 GMT  
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Mark Chan (chanm@cadvision.com) writes:

> Could someone please explain to me what 'replacing the IDL 5.4 IDL\_gif.so  
> library and DLM files with the ones from IDL 5.3' means?  
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> I have never done anything like this before. Will like to learn this more.  
>  
> I have 5.4 and am using 5.3 because of this gif problem. For the time being  
> I don't need to use this trick but don't mind knowing more  
>  
> I am not a lawyer!

I think what they mean is, you will NEED a lawyer if  
you try this. :-)

I think even with my meager computer skills I could  
figure out how to move a file from the IDL 5.3 distribution  
over to the IDL 5.4 distribution. But I still think it  
is easier to switch to JPEG files. And, as an added bonus,

the colors will be better and device-independent when you publish them on the web. :-)

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting

Phone: 970-221-0438 E-Mail: davidf@dfanning.com

Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>

Toll-Free IDL Book Orders: 1-888-461-0155

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Subject: Re: HOW

Posted by [Mark Chan](#) on Fri, 26 Jan 2001 02:38:09 GMT

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Anyone dare to answer my questions? Email me directly if needed. What is the function of .so file and what is it's intended use?

MC

"Mark Chan" <chanm@cadvision.com> wrote in message  
news:94o6t1\$1vI\$1@news3.cadvision.com...

> I am not a lawyer!

>

> Could someone please explain to me what 'replacing the IDL 5.4 IDL\_gif.so

> library and DLM files with the ones from IDL 5.3' means?

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> I have 5.4 and am using 5.3 because of this gif problem. For the time  
being

> I don't need to use this trick but don't mind knowing more.

>

> Thanks,

> Mark Chan

>

>

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> news:ony9w79q8j.fsf@cow.physics.wisc.edu...

>>

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Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 and gifs  
Posted by [Richard French](#) on Fri, 26 Jan 2001 03:46:03 GMT  
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Just got David Fanning's 2d ed and on p. 150 he says  
"you must have a letter from the GIF file format patent  
holder (Compuserve) granting you permission to create  
GIF files . RSI will supply you with the proper license  
for GIF file formation upon receipt...."

I've fired off a letter to tech support but have not  
heard back yet about details. In the meantime, I  
thought I'd ask if anyone out there has tried to get  
a license from Compuserve, and how much it would cost?  
This is the first time I have heard that there was  
ANY provision for allowing individual users to get a  
GIF license. Of course, it may be prohibitively expensive,  
but perhaps for lowly academic types who are not trying  
to make money on it, it would be affordable.

I'll let you know what I found out, but thought that  
others might want to know that there may be a way out

of this yet.

Dick French

---

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Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 and gifs  
Posted by [davidf](#) on Fri, 26 Jan 2001 04:21:36 GMT  
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Richard G. French (rfrench@wellesley.edu) writes:

> Just got David Fanning's 2d ed and on p. 150 he says  
> "you must have a letter from the GIF file format patent  
> holder (Compuserve) granting you permission to create  
> GIF files . RSI will supply you with the proper license  
> for GIF file formation upon receipt...."

Well, that is what was in the works when I wrote  
that section of the book. But the last I heard  
nothing had been worked out with Compuserve. I'd  
be curious to know where things stand too. But  
I wouldn't be surprised to find that GIF files  
are history. :-(

Cheers,

David

--

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Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 and gifs  
Posted by [Richard French](#) on Fri, 26 Jan 2001 21:01:25 GMT  
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Here is the authoritative answer from the IDL Product Manager at RSINC.  
(It appears to me that the best short-term solution is for some clever  
soul with time on their hands to come up with an interface to the  
library of GIF routines in <http://www.imagemagick.org/>  
but that is more than I can tackle at the moment.) - Dick

> I sincerely apologize for your inconvenience in this matter. We are

- > currently legally unable to fulfill your request. We are actively pursuing
- > a resolution with Unisys for our users at this time. I can not give you a
- > definite date for this resolution, but we will announce publicly when we are
- > again able to offer this feature to our users and what the process will be
- > to activate it.
- >
- > One detail I can confirm is that our agreement only covers our ability to
- > offer GIF technology to our customers. It is, unfortunately, the customer's
- > obligation to obtain a license from Unisys themselves (this is out of our
- > control).
- >
- > If you happen to undertake this, or have already done so, I would appreciate
- > learning from you what the process is like for the benefit of other users.
- > Is it different for educational institutions, etc.?

David Fanning wrote:

- >
- > Richard G. French (rfrench@wellesley.edu) writes:
- >
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- >> "you must have a letter from the GIF file format patent
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- > Cheers,
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- > David
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- > --
- > David Fanning, Ph.D.
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Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 and gifs  
Posted by [Todd Clements](#) on Fri, 26 Jan 2001 22:31:16 GMT  
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"Richard G. French" <[rfrench@wellesley.edu](mailto:rfrench@wellesley.edu)> wrote:

> Here is the authoritative answer from the IDL Product Manager at RSINC.  
> (It appears to me that the best short-term solution is for some clever  
> soul with time on their hands to come up with an interface to the  
> library of GIF routines in <http://www.imagemagick.org/>  
> but that is more than I can tackle at the moment.) - Dick

Or you can do it to the old routines in ghostscript. They don't currently support GIF due to the copyright issue, but they do specifically say that you can download the old GIF routines and they work with the current ghostscript.

Then, just print a .ps file, and use the IDL commands below (which are easily put into a procedure). I show it for PNG because I don't have the GIF libraries installed so I can't figure out the device name, but the device name is easy to figure out...just launch ghostscript with "-h" It will list all the devices.



```
;;----- for UNIX... easily modified for windows
;;----- probably have to write an applescript on the mac
device = 'png16m'
res = 150
outFile = 'outfile.png'
inputFile = 'file.ps'

str = 'gs -sDEVICE='+device+' -dBATCH -dNOPAUSE -q -r'+ $
      strtrim(fix(res),2)+' -sOutputFile='+outFile + $
      ' ' + inputFile
spawn, str
print, 'File written.'
;;-----
```

The nice thing I've found about using ghostscript is that it gives very consistent results across many different file formats. IDL is not that consistent, thus David's claim to fame that he can make it consistent. But this allows you to create plots at any resolution by changing the res parameter without having to change any major system variables and without having to regenerate your plot.

Todd

---

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Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 and gifs  
Posted by [davidf](#) on Fri, 26 Jan 2001 22:47:14 GMT  
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Todd Clements (mole6e23@hotmail.com) writes:

> IDL is not that  
> consistent, thus David's claim to fame that he can make it consistent.

Well, this is \*one\* of them. But this all happened  
after I got married. :-)

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.  
Fanning Software Consulting  
Phone: 970-221-0438 E-Mail: [davidf@dfanning.com](mailto:davidf@dfanning.com)  
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Subject: Re: IDL 5.4 and gifs  
Posted by [Richard French](#) on Fri, 26 Jan 2001 23:36:44 GMT  
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Here's more.....

Unisys official statement regarding patent use:

<http://lpf.ai.mit.edu/Patents/Gif/unisys.html>

and here is the CompuServe license agreement.

[http://lpf.ai.mit.edu/Patents/Gif/gif\\_lic.html](http://lpf.ai.mit.edu/Patents/Gif/gif_lic.html)

To me, it sounds as if they would want to charge RSI 1.5% of the cost of an IDL license EACH YEAR for the use of GIF/LZW format.

I would imagine that at least some end users would be willing to pay that cost in order to keep GIF around for legacy purpose. However, my impression is that RSI has not yet sorted out with CompuServe exactly how this agreement would work.

Dick French

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Subject: Re: HOW  
Posted by [marc schellens\[1\]](#) on Tue, 06 Feb 2001 06:55:16 GMT  
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Mark Chan wrote:

>  
> Anyone dare to answer my questions? Email me directly if needed. What is the  
> function of .so file and what is it's intended use?  
>  
> MC

Hi Mark,

a .so file is a so called 'dynamic library' (and .a file a static library there are also some .la files, but I don't know what they are or what all those extensions mean, somebody out there who knows?) at Solaris and Linux at least. The same (or similar) as a .dll file under windows. A dynamic library is a file which contains parts of a program, which are

only

loaded to memory when actually needed by the program.

I.e. a library must be referenced by the (binary) program (here 'idl' or 'idlde')

to be of any use.

So the answer to your question is no, you cannot use any (binary) part of an

old IDL version with a new version, unless you change (patch) the binary file.

But to do this you need lots of knowledge about the binary (and .so files ;-)

For compeltelyness: a static libray is a part of the program which is directly included in the program, so only needed during building the program.

cheers,  
:-) marc

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