
Subject: Cool Help!

Posted by [btupper](#) on Mon, 08 Jul 2002 14:53:47 GMT

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Hello,

You may recall a while back that I had a thorn under my saddle regarding the IDL online help (in particular for IDL 5.5 which was padded on as a PDF.) Some folk passed along ideas about what might be nice for future online help system, and I faithfully sent those ideas along to RSI. I hope I sent them to the right place but I have no idea since I received no response.

In the meantime, Andrew Cool had been cooking up a method for extracting the online help text (including that for IDL 5.5) via that neat IDL 5.5 HTML help files that David is hosting at his website. I still don't know who crafted that.

We have now wrapped Andrew's query routine with a GUI wrapper. The GUI provides an alphabetical index, a routine list, a 'See Also' list, and the help text for the queried routine. The GUI is object based but the object is stored in a system variable for easy access.

You can retrieve the three necessary files from...

www.tidewater.net/~pemaquid/coolhelp.zip

Simply unzip all three files into your !PATH and then

IDL> ch

or

IDL> ch, 'uniq' ;or whatever routine you would like to see

You might need to reset your session before it will work and you *WILL* need to have

(1) Martin Schultz's MGS_BASEOBJECT

<http://www.mpimet.mpg.de/~schultz.martin/idl/index.html>

and

(2) David Fanning's COYOTE_PROGRAMS.ZIP

<http://www.dfanning.com/documents/programs/coyoteprograms.zip>

This package has been tested on WIN98 and Win2000. Please direct comments and suggestions to Andrew at andrew.cool@dsto.defence.gov.au or to me at pemaquidriver@tidewater.net.

Regards,

Ben

Subject: Re: Cool Help!
Posted by [R.Bauer](#) on Wed, 10 Jul 2002 21:54:47 GMT
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Dear Ben,

I got an error by downloading the zip file.

Not Found

The requested URL /~pemaquid/coolhelp.zip was not found on this server.

Apache/1.3.20 Server at www.tidewater.net Port 80

How far is the `gen_write` and `gen_read` for Labview?

cheers

Reimar

Ben Tupper wrote:

>
> Hello,
>
> You may recall a while back that I had a thorn under my saddle
> regarding the IDL online help (in particular for IDL 5.5 which was
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> comments and suggestions to Andrew at andrew.cool@dsto.defence.gov.au
> or to me at pemaquidriver@tidewater.net.
>
> Regards,
>
> Ben

--
Reimar Bauer

Institut fuer Stratosphaerische Chemie (ICG-I)

Forschungszentrum Juelich
email: R.Bauer@fz-juelich.de

a IDL library at Forschungszentrum Juelich
http://www.fz-juelich.de/icg/icg1/idl_icglib/idl_lib_intro.html
=====

Subject: Re: Cool Help!
Posted by [btupper](#) on Thu, 11 Jul 2002 20:38:30 GMT
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Howdy!

Reimar Bauer <r.bauer@fz-juelich.de> wrote in message
news:<3D2CAD27.9B35BF34@fz-juelich.de>...

> Dear Ben,
>
> I got an error by downloading the zip file.
>
> Not Found
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> The requested URL /~pemaquid/coolhelp.zip was not found on this server.
>
> Apache/1.3.20 Server at www.tidewater.net Port 80

My Goof! The correct spelling is CoolHelp.zip. Try the following:

www.tidewater.net/~pemaquid/CoolHelp.zip

When this was updated the necessary files from Martin Schultz and
David Fanning were added by Andrew. The misspelling was added by me.
Hope this fixes it for you.

>
> How far is the gen_write and gen_read for Labview?
>

No further along... although it should be easy. I fell off the end of
the LabView grant.. I hate it when the money runs out!

Regards,

Ben

Subject: Re: Cool Help!

Posted by [JD Smith](#) on Tue, 16 Jul 2002 20:38:46 GMT

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On Mon, 08 Jul 2002 07:53:47 -0700, Ben Tupper wrote:

> Hello,
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> You may recall a while back that I had a thorn under my saddle regarding
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> HTML help files that David is hosting at his website. I still don't
> know who crafted that

The help text came from IDLWAVE, the Emacs IDL programming/shell mode (idlwave.org), which uses it for it's own internal fast text-help system. The massive perl script `get_rinfo` does the heavy lifting, but relies on the excellent `pdftotext` program by Derek Noonburg to extract raw text from RSI's PDF help files. It also flags and corrects typos, inserts updated documentation that RSI was too lazy to integrate themselves ;), normalizes calling sequences, etc. It employs all manner of crufty techniques to digest this inconsistent data pile, to pare it down to something useful.

However, since `get_rinfo` creates lisp-indexed files for use by IDLWAVE, converting the `idlw-help.txt` file it creates to HTML is somewhat roundabout. It would be easy enough to take `get_rinfo` as a base, and, in perl, create a full HTML-izer for RSI's PDF help texts which is rather more optimal than the by-hand-from-ascii method Andrew employed. You could create full indices, nicely-layed-out tables, cross-references within help documents, etc.

If anyone is interested, `get_rinfo` is available as part of the IDLWAVE package at idlwave.org.

JD

P.S. The other option is to bug RSI to include full HTML versions of their help system... this may not be as hopeless as you'd guess.
