
Subject: IDL 6.0

Posted by [jlhall](#) on Thu, 27 Mar 2003 18:04:39 GMT

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Does anyone have any substantial information about IDL 6.0? When is the planned release? What will the major differences be between 6.0 and the current version?

All I could find was this page in Chinese... which is still relatively mysterious after babelfish translation:

http://astron.berkeley.edu/~jhall/export/IDL_6.0.pdf

Joseph Lorenzo Hall

jlhall@sonic.net

Subject: Re: IDL 6.0

Posted by [Randall Skelton](#) on Fri, 28 Mar 2003 09:47:30 GMT

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On Fri, 28 Mar 2003, Michael W Asten wrote:

> This viewpoint shows an interesting divergence between different classes of
> users. I am of the troglodyte school who do not use objects (do I hear a Coyote
> howling from the next hill?). But I do use guis to drive my programs, and I dont
> like programming guis - I prefer to use ready-made items; I use IDL to get quick
> results from my data, not to generate fancy code.

I may have hastily overstated my request... I too make guis so I can quickly load and visualize data and I agree that more ready-made items will probably make this easier. Provided, of course, that I can afford the next suite of IDL programming books that describe how to actually use these new features ;)

I suppose my concern is that IDL stops being an 'Interactive Data Language' and instead becomes a glorified visual-basic competitor. The thought of double-clicking on each IDL object to get an 'objectsheet' where I enter formulas such as '=A1+\$B\$2+(SUM(D12:14))^2' is horrifying.

For the record, many people in my department don't use guis, objects, functions or even procedures. Yes, many of the people I work with write 'routines' that are strung together using .run commands. With the aforementioned suite of code they '.r read_modelout.pro' or '.r modelradforce.pro' and, after answering a seemingly endless stream of console queries, they return to the IDL prompt to '.r diagnose.pro', 'print, res1, xh, bb, yobs', and '.r normplot1.pro' to produce direct-graphics windows and postscript plots of the atmosphere. You are certainly correct that such discussions do highlight the various classes

of users.

Cheers,
Randall

NB: from <<http://www.winternet.com/~mikelr/flame39.html>> one learns:

Troglodyte -- an aggressive Philistine who categorically disdains all new-age enthusiasms and politics, and has a particular animus against "homos", "tree huggers", and artsy types. His/her loud brandishings of "common sense" and "reason" are nothing more than conceits to justify his/her close mindedness. Troglodyte's fierce, but predictable attacks are easily parried by more nimble Warriors. Sometimes, just for fun, Weenie or Issues will taunt him/her into a towering rage.

Subject: Re: IDL 6.0

Posted by [mmiller3](#) on Fri, 28 Mar 2003 15:28:17 GMT

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>>>> > "David" == David Fanning <david@dfanning.com> writes:

> P.S. Let's just say I was going to say something sarcastic
> about Mike Miller's "Here, here", but decided against it on
> further reflection. :-)

Don't hold back on my account :-)

Mike

Subject: Re: IDL 6.0

Posted by [mmiller3](#) on Fri, 28 Mar 2003 15:51:37 GMT

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>>>> > "Michael" == Michael A Miller <mmiller3@iupui.edu> writes:

> That and access to command line arguments like every other
> language on the planet would go a long way to streamlining
> my IDL use.

To clarify my point a bit - what I'm getting at is that much of what we do here with IDL is interactive, so the "I" in IDL is really great. Even more of what we do is along the lines of "take what we've developed interactively and repeat it over and over and over ad infinitum." The cumbersome methods that are needed to pass parameters to IDL codes from outside IDL has

> than I'd like.
>
> Ok, I'll get off that soap box now ;-)

The problem is the IDL startup time is long enough that interactive use is stressed much more than batch use. I.e. the standard response would be that you should string together your bits of code in an *IDL* script/batch-file/\$MAIN\$-level-routine.

If you have other types of code you need to interact with in IDL, call it from there (as opposed to visa versa). This can be awkward if IDL is really just a small component of a large process, but it's really the most convenient way.

JD

Subject: Re: IDL 6.0
Posted by [MC](#) on Sat, 29 Mar 2003 00:38:41 GMT
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I am with you fellows.

Direct Graphics and non-object programming was what attracted me to IDL. Quick and easy data visualization. I do what I needed for my use. Not to have fancy interfaces for others most of the time.

Hope future releases will continue to improve our needs so that IDL will not become just 'another addition' to a whole lot of programming softwares (many of which are much more powerful than IDL) already available to professional programmers.

MC

"Randall Skelton" <rhskelto@atm.ox.ac.uk> wrote in message
news:Pine.LNX.4.33.0303280853520.2390-100000@moriarty.atm.ox.ac.uk...

>
> On Fri, 28 Mar 2003, Michael W Asten wrote:
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> direct-graphics windows and postscript plots of the atmosphere. You are
> certainly correct that such discussions do highlight the various classes
> of users.
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> Randall
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> NB: from <<http://www.winternet.com/~mikelr/flame39.html>> one learns:
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> his/her close mindedness. Troglodyte's fierce, but predictable attacks
> are easily parried by more nimble Warriors. Sometimes, just for fun,
> Weenie or Issues will taunt him/her into a towering rage.
>

Subject: Re: IDL 6.0

Posted by [wmconnolley](#) on Sat, 29 Mar 2003 14:14:17 GMT

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MC <markchan@shaw.ca> wrote:

> Quick and easy data visualization. I do what I needed for my use. Not to
> have fancy interfaces for others most of the time.

Indeed.

> Hope future releases will continue to improve our needs

BTW, does the contouring routine still need /cell_fill to work properly?

-W.

Subject: Re: IDL 6.0

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Sat, 29 Mar 2003 14:32:19 GMT

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wmc@bas.ac.uk (wmc@bas.ac.uk) writes:

> BTW, does the contouring routine still need /cell_fill to work properly?

No, it still works "properly". At least it does if that means what I think it means. :-)

Cheers,

David

--

David W. Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.

Phone: 970-221-0438, E-mail: david@dfanning.com

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

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

Subject: Re: IDL 6.0

Posted by [wmconnolley](#) on Sat, 29 Mar 2003 20:31:52 GMT

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David Fanning <david@dfanning.com> wrote:

> wmc@bas.ac.uk (wmc@bas.ac.uk) writes:

>> BTW, does the contouring routine still need /cell_fill to work properly?

> No, it still works "properly". At least it does if that
> means what I think it means. :-)

Hmmm, disregarding my spelling, always a good idea, trying looking at:

<http://www.antarctica.ac.uk/met/wmc/a.png>

the LHS plot is without /cellfill. The RHS is with /cell_fill.
The RHS is correct. The LHS isn't.

{ alpha OSF unix 5.4 Sep 25 2000 64 64}

-W.

--

William M Connolley | wmc@bas.ac.uk | <http://www.nerc-bas.ac.uk/icd/wmc/>
Climate Modeller, British Antarctic Survey | Disclaimer: I speak for myself
I'm a .signature virus! copy me into your .signature file & help me spread!

Subject: Re: IDL 6.0

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Sun, 30 Mar 2003 01:08:27 GMT

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William M Connolley (wmc@bas.ac.uk) writes:

- > Hmm, disregarding my spelling, always a good idea, trying looking at:
- >
- > <http://www.antarctica.ac.uk/met/wmc/a.png>
- >
- > the LHS plot is without /cellfill. The RHS is with /cell_fill.
- > The RHS is correct. The LHS isn't.

Yes, well, creating a filled contour on a map projection
always requires CELL_FILL. I think I even found a warning
about this in the IDL documentation while I was looking for
something else. (At least I remember thinking, 'Humm, that's
interesting. I wonder what the hell it is doing *here*!')

In any case, the point is fairly dramatically made in this
article on my web page:

http://www.dfanning.com/color_tips/fill_colors.html

Cheers,

David

--

David W. Fanning, Ph.D.
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Subject: Re: IDL 6.0

Posted by [wmconolley](#) on Sun, 30 Mar 2003 21:54:30 GMT

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David Fanning <david@dfanning.com> wrote:

> Yes, well, creating a filled contour on a map projection
> *always* requires CELL_FILL.

And is therefore slow. This is the point I was trying to make: I'd like improved support for basics (such as this) rather than... well, you know, widgets and stuff :-)

-W.

--

William M Connolley | wmc@bas.ac.uk | <http://www.nerc-bas.ac.uk/icd/wmc/>
Climate Modeller, British Antarctic Survey | Disclaimer: I speak for myself
I'm a .signature virus! copy me into your .signature file & help me spread!

Subject: Re: IDL 6.0

Posted by [mmiller3](#) on Mon, 31 Mar 2003 15:50:45 GMT

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>>>> > "JD" == JD Smith <jdsmith@as.arizona.edu> writes:

> The problem is the IDL startup time is long enough that
> interactive use is stressed much more than batch use.
> I.e. the standard response would be that you should string
> together your bits of code in an *IDL*
> script/batch-file/\$MAIN\$-level-routine.

IDL starts in about 3 seconds or less on the machine I just timed it on (2 GHz pentiums). The jobs we're regularly running take from 5-500 minutes, so start up time is negligible.

Mike

Subject: Re: IDL 6.0

Posted by [JD Smith](#) on Mon, 31 Mar 2003 16:23:48 GMT

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On Mon, 31 Mar 2003 08:50:45 -0700, Michael A. Miller wrote:

>>>> >> "JD" == JD Smith <jdsmith@as.arizona.edu> writes:

>

>> The problem is the IDL startup time is long enough that
>> interactive use is stressed much more than batch use. I.e. the

>> standard response would be that you should string together your
>> bits of code in an *IDL* script/batch-file/\$MAIN\$-level-routine.
>
> IDL starts in about 3 seconds or less on the machine I just timed it on
> (2 GHz pentiums). The jobs we're regularly running take from 5-500
> minutes, so start up time is negligible.
>

Yes, but that didn't use to be the case. It might be nice if IDL had a non-command-line mode which skipped all the interface startup and went straight into the interpreter. The basic issue is that IDL doesn't see itself as an equal tool among many, but as *the* tool, to which can be tacked on bits and pieces of code from other languages as necessary. Writing an IDL script which drives a perl script is trivial. Writing a perl script which drives an IDL script is less so. For good or for bad, IDL's original authors were probably disillusioned with the "string together various disparate pieces" method of problem solving, and wrote IDL to be a "one-stop-shopping" data language.

JD
