
Subject: Restore IDL code from .sav file?

Posted by [Jonathan Joseph](#) on Wed, 24 Dec 2003 20:13:21 GMT

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Twass the night before christmas and I did something incredibly stupid!

I edited a couple of .pro files in the wrong location (old versions of files). In a moment of temporary insanity, I didn't realize that they were old and different from the files in my working CVS directory, so I copied them right over the top of my good files, which had MANY changes I had made in the past 5 days and was just (really just) about to check back in.

After testing the code, I realized what I had done. Aaaaagh!

Date of last incremental backup: 5 days ago, just after I started with these changes. Nothing useful to recover from tape.

Emacs ~ backup files: None. (an emacs setting that I haven't changed yet makes it so that when I edit files in a checked out CVS directory, it doesn't make ~ backups).

Single strand of hope: I happen to have another recent IDLDE session open. It has compiled versions of the pre-trashed files (but does not have the source code in a buffer). I just made a .sav file of all the routines, so at least the compiled versions are not lost.

Question: Is there any way to recover the actual source from the .sav file or from my IDLDE session that has the compiled versions of the good code?

Thanks and Merry Christmas.

-Jonathan

Subject: Re: Restore IDL code from .sav file?

Posted by [Haje Korth](#) on Mon, 29 Dec 2003 14:09:32 GMT

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Jonathan,
hey that story sounds familiar, happened to me too once. Unfortunately there is probably nothing you can do about it at this point. Craig Markwardt had routines that do exactly what you want (and what I needed) included in his cmsvlib for a few days. But then a herd of people including RSI started beating on him for publishing proprietary information, so he withdrew the routine prodis, which caused all this hassle. I tried to search the internet

forever to retrieve the library to recover my code that I spent quite some time on, without success. So the frustrating answer is that there is a way to recover source code from sav file, but it is illegal. If you are ambitious, you can download info on the sav file format from Craig's website. His documentation gives you an overview and you will find, why RSI was upset about that particular version of cmsvlib, even though he does not elaborate on the particular info.

Haje

PS: If you find prodis somewhere, let me know, I would love to recover the source of my code too. I tried the wayback machine, but they do not store binaries...

--

"Jonathan Joseph" <jj21@cornell.edu> wrote in message
news:3FE9F361.9060109@cornell.edu...

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Subject: Re: Restore IDL code from .sav file?
Posted by [Rick Towler](#) on Mon, 29 Dec 2003 18:49:11 GMT
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I would guess that someone at RSI could do this. Either they have their own internal tools, a copy of prodis, or both. The only question is whether they would be willing to perform this service and how much they would charge. Oh, and they would probably want some assurance that you were the original author of the code which could prove to be tricky unless your installation # is embedded in the save file.

So how much is the code worth?

-Rick

"Haje Korth" wrote in message ...

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Subject: Re: Restore IDL code from .sav file?
Posted by [Craig Markwardt](#) on Mon, 29 Dec 2003 20:24:58 GMT
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"Haje Korth" <haje.korth@jhupl.edu> writes:

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After Kodak threatened a potential lawsuit, and implied a threat to my job, I did indeed withdraw the core translator for IDL save files with code.

I believed, and I still believe, that there are legitimate uses for a save file translator, and it is not illegal. We as users are not required to protect RSI's flawed business models. I developed the translator code because I myself accidentally deleted some source code, and needed to recover it from a save file. Obviously other people have the same problem. I have been recommending that people with this same need contact RSI and explain their dilemma. And further, I recommend against using save files for code.

Craig

> ... His documentation gives you an overview and you will find, why RSI
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P.S. By the way, the on-line documentation is for data only, no code.

--

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

Subject: Re: Restore IDL code from .sav file?
Posted by [Haje Korth](#) on Mon, 29 Dec 2003 20:46:56 GMT
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Rick,
you are asking the right question: How much is it worth? And the answer is probably not enough to justify expenses. That is why I have given up. I will just rewrite the code using my weekends while ticking off my family for hiding in my office. :-)

By the way, proving ownership is actually not that hard, since detailed information is actually contained in the sav files. Craig's documentation describes the sav file format quite well and it is easy to retrieve these info. However, his documentation skims over the way functions and routines are encoded (probably for a reason). Consequently, it is more time consuming to figure out how to disassemble the sav files in general then it is to rewrite my code. Therefore, I have not bothered since.

Haje

PS: I bet all the fuss is about the embedded IDL licensing that could be uncovered. And just looking at the sav files and the inofficial documentation, you can see that you do not need prodis to fake the licensing. But again, who cares???

--

"Rick Towler" <rtowler@u.washington.edu> wrote in message
news:bspt4f\$I22\$1@nntp6.u.washington.edu...

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Subject: Re: Restore IDL code from .sav file?
Posted by [Jonathan Joseph](#) on Tue, 30 Dec 2003 17:24:51 GMT
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Thanks for your posts.

After posting that message, and kicking around a few chairs, I spent about 4 hours reconstructing the changes I had made to the easier of the two files. Then, as I was looking again through my other recent IDLDE session, lo and behold, I found that I actually *did* have the second file open in the IDLDE editor and the code was sitting there with all of the changes in tact. I carefully did a save-as, ignoring the warnings that the file had changed on disk and didn't I really want that version instead.

So with a little luck and a good deal of patience, I was able to recover/reconstruct the lost changes. Even without the source code for the file I had truly lost, I was at least able to run to compiled version to corroborate that with reasonable certainty I was able to re-derive most of the changes I had made - I even found a spot where I had accidentally forgotten to include something the first time around.

A very frustrating Christmas eve, but I think I've got the code back to where I want it.

-Jonathan

Craig Markwardt wrote:

> "Haje Korth" <haje.korth@jhuapl.edu> writes:

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Subject: Re: Restore IDL code from .sav file?

Posted by [JD Smith](#) on Thu, 01 Jan 2004 00:34:32 GMT

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On Mon, 29 Dec 2003 13:24:58 -0700, Craig Markwardt wrote:

> "Haje Korth" <haje.korth@jhuapl.edu> writes:

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> need contact RSI and explain their dilemma. And further, I recommend
> against using save files for code.

The basic issue, I believe, is that Kodak/RSI would like to move IDL away from being a tool used by scientist who, almost without exception, share their code with each other, to a "platform" for developers and software entrepreneurs, ala Java. The ironic thing is how completely open most IDL code is, despite the very closed nature of the IDL core itself. And frankly, it is this spirit of open sharing that has kept IDL alive. Even people like David Fanning, who make a living selling IDL-related services and information, have adopted an essentially open-source philosophy (though they may curse it at times). Imagine postings like:

"I found a new solution to this tricky sorting problem which uses HISTOGRAM to achieve speed-up of 10x or more. You can find it on shareware.com as a .SAV file. It only costs \$14.95, and you'll get free updates for life after that."

That just would never work. That's not the kind of language IDL is; it doesn't address questions that people want immediate, canned, not-too-expensive answers to, like an mp3 player shaped like a banana or an easy to use calendar widget with color-coded phases of the moon. For better or worse, IDL is a tinkerer's language... and I'd be willing to bet it will remain that, or fade into obscurity.

JD

P.S. In the interest of full disclosure, I should say that even I am

not immune to the lure of "compiled" IDL programs running under the free IDLVM. Mea culpa.
