
Subject: Re: iTools split personality (was Re: Subclassing from IDLitTool ??)

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Fri, 03 Sep 2004 19:12:56 GMT

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Wayne Landsman writes:

- > I recently received an iTools brochure from RSI, which included the
- > following quote from a satisfied user.... ;-)
- >
- > "The iTools system is extremely well thought out. There is no question
- > that having an object framework like this will shorten the time it takes
- > to develop new Object Graphics tools"
- >
- > David Fanning, Fanning Software Consulting

There must not have been enough space on the brochure for the full quote, which read something like this, as I recall:

"The iTools system is extremely well thought out. There is no question that having an object framework like this will shorten the time it takes to develop new Object Graphics tools, assuming you can read between the lines of the IDL documentation and don't want to develop anything except the kind of tools RSI has already created for you."

Something like that... :-)

Actually, my problem with iTools is not that it isn't well thought out. It is *extremely* well thought out. And it *would* save an enormous amount of time writing applications. Something like it is certainly necessary to encourage people to use iTools. My problem with iTools is that the system is so complex as to make it virtually unusable by anyone outside of RSI.

Better documentation would help, of course, but I just don't see scientists writing iTool programs, probably ever. A huge amount of resources are being devoted to it, so probably RSI knows something I don't, but I just don't think this is what the vast majority of their current customers need or want.

- > P.S. My question about iTools is -- why a third graphics system? I
- > was just getting used to object graphics when I learned that the IDL
- > expert programmer now needs to be proficient in direct graphics, object
- > graphics, and iTool graphics.

Oh, well, I've decided to leave that "expert programmer" business

to the drunks in the IEPA. I'm just going to stick to what I can understand. :-)

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.

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

Subject: Re: iTools split personality (was Re: Subclassing from IDLitTool ??)

Posted by [JD Smith](#) on Fri, 03 Sep 2004 20:03:50 GMT

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On Fri, 03 Sep 2004 14:24:11 -0400, Wayne Landsman wrote:

>> David Fanning wrote:

>> I've heard of people outside of RSI who *are* writing iTool programs,
>> but they seem to be creating their own help files and documentation as
>> they go. Maybe they will share it with RSI when they are finished. :-)

>

> I recently received an iTools brochure from RSI, which included the
> following quote from a satisfied user.... ;-)

>

> "The iTools system is extremely well thought out. There is no question
> that having an object framework like this will shorten the time it takes
> to develop new Object Graphics tools"

>

> David Fanning, Fanning Software Consulting

>

New iTools user: "Who is this straight-talking IDL wizard Fanning?

Let's see what other good things he has to say about iTools... "

[... google groups searching, Fanning+iTools]

"I have heard of people outside of RSI writing programs with iTools,
but they have spent the past six months writing their own
documentation so they can figure it out."

"Is anyone actually doing useful work with iTools? I don't
personally know anyone who uses them. (Or at least has confided that
fact to me.)"

"Of course, the price of this feature is an enormous increase in complexity, which I think makes iTools so complicated no one outside of RSI can use it. (Which, I have been thinking lately, must really be the Plan. :-)"

"Otherwise the one or two people who use those iTools (according to my recent informal survey) would be *extremely* upset. :^)"

Truth in advertising activists, alert ;).

JD

Subject: Re: iTools split personality (was Re: Subclassing from IDLitTool ??)
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Fri, 03 Sep 2004 20:55:14 GMT
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JD Smith writes:

- > New iTools user: "Who is this straight-talking IDL wizard Fanning?
- > Let's see what other good things he has to say about iTools... "
- > [... google groups searching, Fanning+iTools]
- >
- >
- > "I have heard of people outside of RSI writing programs with iTools,
- > but they have spent the past six months writing their own
- > documentation so they can figure it out."
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- > "Is anyone actually doing useful work with iTools? I don't
- > personally know anyone who uses them. (Or at least has confided that
- > fact to me.)"
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- > "Of course, the price of this feature is an enormous increase in
- > complexity, which I think makes iTools so complicated no one outside
- > of RSI can use it. (Which, I have been thinking lately, must really
- > be the Plan. :-)"
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- > "Otherwise the one or two people who use those iTools (according to
- > my recent informal survey) would be *extremely* upset. :^)"
- >
- >
- > Truth in advertising activists, alert ;).

You know, RSI has been very, very good to me over the years. David Stern gave me the opportunity to create the best job I ever had. I still appreciate it. It changed my life.

But, I have one (well, at *least* one) fundamental flaw as a person: I'm not very good at dissembling. :-)

It's gotten me into all kinds of hot water, at RSI and elsewhere. Well, nobody gets to be my age without some regrets, I guess. And I could have been more subtle, or I could have just shut the hell up a couple of times, and I would have been better off for it. And I didn't, I'm sorry to say.

But here is the thing. That quote is dead-on accurate. (The first version I saw was a flight of the publicist's fantasy.) I wrote it pretty darn sure it would be used for publicity. I *thought* about it for a LONG time. I'm ashamed of any number of things in my life. But I am not ashamed of that quote. I'll stand by it no matter what else I think or say about iTools. At the moment I said it, I believed it. I'd like to think you could count on that.

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.
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