Subject: IDLWAVE 6.0 -- idlwave.org
Posted by JD Smith on Sat, 18 Feb 2006 00:56:39 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

IDLWAVE 6.0 -- http://idlwave.org

Gradually catching up with IDL's version numbering, this new IDLWAVE release features an improved HTML help system which eliminates the need to download and maintain your own HTML help packages. With IDL 6.2, RSI has begun distributing online help directly as a directory full of HTML files, in !DIR/help/online_help. In addition, RSI has provided a fully linked XML file which obviates the old PDF and HTML-scanned routine info (!DIR/help/online_help/idl_catalog.xml, if you are interested). This means that IDLWAVE's help system is now fully de-coupled from any individual distribution of IDL. You'll get fast and accurate context sensitive help for whatever version of IDL you have installed. Nothing additional to install, no more "off-by-one" help topics -- your context help will always been in sync and ready to go.

With IDL 6.2, RSI also bundled a new HTML browser called IDL_ASSISTANT. In addition to displaying the HTML help files, the tool provides fast searching, bookmarking, etc. IDLWAVE now uses the IDL Assistant directly for displaying context-based help. Alternatively, you can continue to use any existing browser supported by Emacs, including Emacs-local browsers like w3m.

Many other fixes and improvements are also available in IDLWAVE 6.0, including much improved handling of the optional automatic space-padding of operators >, <, >=, <=, ->, &, and &&, "safe" printing when examining long arrays, an overlay color change to gray, to indicate IDL is busy when stepping through code which is slow to execute, direct printing of entered expressions in Electric Debug mode, "sensible" default indent settings, and more.

Get your fix at:

http://idlwave.org

Notes on the new HTML Help
==========

With the new help system, it's now more important than ever for IDLWAVE to know where your IDL installation is. So, either set the environment variable IDL_DIR, customize the Emacs variable idlwave-system-directory, or just run the IDLWAVE shell once (C-c C-s), and it will locate and save the information it needs for future use (while you are there, give the shell a try, you may like it).

MacOSX users: The "idl_assistant" script bundled with IDL 6.2 has a small bug which prevents the assistant from running from IDLWAVE. To fix it, see http://www.rsinc.com/codebank/search.asp?FID=399. This will be fixed in IDL 6.3.

For picky users: The idl_catalog.xml file which IDLWAVE uses to learn the structure of the new HTML help system has some small errors for IDL6.2. Though this doesn't affect usability (aside from the lack of availability of context help for, e.g., SYSTIME), you can fix this by replacing your idl_catalog.xml file with the one mentioned here:

http://www.rsinc.com/codebank/search.asp?FID=400

==========
IDLWAVE Tip of the Month:

You've heard of the many advantages of generating additional routine information on your personal and downloaded library routines. Many popular libraries ship with ".idlwave_catalog" library catalog files pre-installed, and IDLWAVE discovers these automatically, learning the location, calling convention, keywords and other syntax information. However, there is one important library which is not pre-indexed: IDL's own, in !DIR/lib. It is a very good idea to index this library yourself. System administrators can simply:

```
% cd /usr/local/rsi/idl/lib
% /path/to/idlwave_catalog RSI_LIB
```

where "idlwave_catalog" is the Perl-based cataloging tool distributed with IDLWAVE. Users without write access to their IDL installation can scan a "user catalog". Just access the menu IDLWAVE->Routine Info->Select Catalog Directories, mark all the directories under your IDL install directory, and scan. When the system library is scanned, routine info will look different for those system files distributed by RSI:

```
Usage:    Result = HIST_2D( V1, V2)
Keywords: BIN1 BIN2 MAX1 MAX2 MIN1 MIN2
Source:   SystemLib   [-C--] /usr/local/rsi/idl_6.1/lib/hist_2d.pro
```

and you'll be able to quickly visit their source by right-clicking on the file name above, or using C-c C-v in the text of your program, etc.

==========