Subject: Re: Response to question about PV-WAVE and IDL
Posted by ali on Wed, 20 Feb 1991 19:50:02 GMT

In article <1991Feb11.184038.20437@batcomputer.tn.cornell.edu>
hearn@batcomputer.tn.cornell.edu (hearn) writes:

> Ok, which should I buy IDL or PV-wave?

to which Peter Hallett of Precision Visuals (mpfh@pvi.UUCP)
responded with two pages of blatant marketing.

At RSI (The authors of IDL and the majority of what is
now sold by PVI as PV-WAVE) we've been reading this newsgroup
since its inception in order to gauge user concerns and opinions,
but have refrained from posting so that comp.lang.idl-pvwave
can remain a useful technical resource free of commercial hype.
We feel, however, that PVI's inappropriate message requires this
response.

Such messages are not appropriate for USENET. This is a non-commercial
medium and certainly not an unpaid advertising service. We believe
that the original question was probably intended for *users* of the
two products --- not the companies that stand to benefit financially.

Clearly, we don't agree with everything PVI had to say in their
posting. Rather than use further net bandwidth however, we invite
anyone interested to email or phone us directly.
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Subject: Re: Response to question about PV-WAVE and IDL
Posted by lbreid on Wed, 20 Feb 1991 20:26:57 GMT

Hooray for Ali Bahrami's call against "blatant marketing" by PV~Wave.
I'm a pvwave user, but with no experience of IDL I didn't feel competent
to reply to the original question of "IDL vs PVWAVE". But Peter Hallett's
reply was strongly couched in marketing bells and whistles terms, none of
which are available on MY lowly system (DECStation).

Not that I'm against PV~Wave -- I think it is a great product, in some respects. But I'd also like to cast my vote against marketing.....

--
Lynn B. Reid
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 ==
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Nobody pays me enough to care what I think.

Subject: Re: Response to question about PV-WAVE and IDL
Posted by khb on Wed, 20 Feb 1991 21:23:58 GMT
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I disagree with the position that the vendors involved should avoid reasoned debate.

It is, or should be, possible to discuss the technical contributions without being tarred with the label "marketing".

While comp.arch often becomes a pit, what various engineers post has been useful and/or interesting to me at least.

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Keith H. Bierman   kbierman@Eng.Sun.COM | khb@chiba.Eng.Sun.COM
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Subject: Re: Response to question about PV-WAVE and IDL
Posted by khb on Wed, 20 Feb 1991 22:19:57 GMT
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In article <1991Feb20.202657.21514@athena.mit.edu> lbreid@athena.mit.edu (Lynn B Reid) writes:

...

respects. But I'd also like to cast my vote against marketing.....

Fine, but the technical issues remain.

The PV wave posting was long, and admittedly not very dense
(informationwise ;>).

I'm not a user of either package; though I've been impressed by
demos... from what we've seen posted it appears:

 1) basic code from IDL is basis for both products
 2) PV has added point and click, and various interface goodies

what has IDL done since? Surely their product is not the same as it
'twas years ago when PV forked off, is it? Is the command language
kept in synch (viz. is there an ongoing IDL->PV code arrangement)?

As I see it, the folks who need these packages the most are practicing
scientists and applied mathfolk. Both groups tend to be rather cash
poor, and spend all their money on hardware (thankfully; as I do work
for one at the moment ;>). Thus, $n000 packages aren't on everyones
desk. These people are likely to be choosy about what they do buy, and
rightfully so.

So the question remains. What are the technical differences (other
than point and click front end)?
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Subject: Re: Response to question about PV-WAVE and IDL
Posted by eckman on Thu, 21 Feb 1991 01:12:55 GMT
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In article <KHB.91Feb20141957@chiba.Eng.Sun.COM> khb@chiba.Eng.Sun.COM (Keith
Bierman fpgroup) writes:
>
> So the question remains. What are the technical differences (other
> than point and click front end)?

  While I can't comment directly on the technical differences between IDL
and PV-Wave, I have been using IDL for over 10 years and have used a demo
copy of PV-Wave. I still remember the days when !HIVOLT was a system
variable back on the PDPs! My impression is that there's minimal difference.
It's clear that the Precision Visual folks do have some new features but these

appear to be related primarily to support new graphics devices (e.g., TEK 4100).

The beauty of IDL for the scientific researcher is the ability to use it as a programming language. It's far more than just a plotting package. While point and click interfaces might be great for managerial types, it seems to defeat the whole purpose of the package. Admittedly, I haven't tried the new PV-Wave point and click front end, but that's my initial impression.

Precision Visual does also offer a support hotline and a slightly prettier manual but I've never had difficulty in getting the RSI folks to solve a problem in short order.

The main difference that pushed me towards RSI, rather than PV-Wave, was cost. IDL was substantially less expensive for our VAXstations and DECstations. I'd personally rather deal with the people who wrote the original software, no matter how competent the folks at Precision Visual clearly are.

Richard Eckman
NASA Langley Research Center
eckman@dobson.larc.nasa.gov

disclaimer: Opinions are obviously my own, not those of NASA.

Subject: Re: Response to question about PV-WAVE and IDL
Posted by sterner on Thu, 21 Feb 1991 21:13:02 GMT
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eckman@asdsun.larc.nasa.gov (Richard Eckman) writes:

> While I can't comment directly on the technical differences between IDL
> and PV-Wave, I have been using IDL for over 10 years and have used a demo
> copy of PV-Wave. I still remember the days when !HIVOLT was a system
> variable back on the PDPs! My impression is that there's minimal difference.
> It's clear that the Precision Visual folks do have some new features but these
> appear to be related primarily to support new graphics devices (e.g., TEK
> 4100).
> The beauty of IDL for the scientific researcher is the ability to use it
> as a programming language. It's far more than just a plotting package.
> While point and click interfaces might be great for managerial types,
> it seems to defeat the whole purpose of the package. Admittedly,
> I haven't tried the new PV-Wave point and click front end, but that's my
> initial impression.

I agree. I've been using IDL for about 7 years and have pretty much abandoned other languages. I enjoy it when people come to me and say "but IDL can't do that" and I show them how to do it. I've always had excellent response from the IDL people, no problem getting help.

I don't know much about PV-WAVE except that it is based on IDL and as
a language is very much the same. As far as point and click, I've
been writing such programs in IDL for awhile using the wmenu function.
This probably isn't the feature that PV-WAVE means, but it works just
fine. This feature will be much improved in future releases of IDL
I'm told. What amazes me most about IDL (and PV-Wave) is that anyone
would still use FORTRAN or similar languages.

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