
Subject: Re: IDL's built-in function DILATE and ERODE doesn't work as described in help

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 12 Oct 2006 02:40:24 GMT

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Gongqin Shen writes:

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> ERODE performs in a similar way. Does that mean the help is actually
> broken?

I think it means DILATE and ERODE are broken, but you are sure to hear from Karsten Rodenacker about this. He has been sending pleas to the folks at ITTVIS for years, all without effect. Maybe the two of you could gang up on them. :-)

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.

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

Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

Subject: Re: IDL's built-in function DILATE and ERODE doesn't work as described in help

Posted by [Karsten Rodenacker](#) on Thu, 12 Oct 2006 07:41:29 GMT

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Don't use IDL's dilate and erode without embedding your data into a sufficiently large array. Border handling is not coherently implemented. That is a large disadvantage, not to say an error, for the application of math. morph. operations in sequences. Ask for improvement, possibly ITTVIS can be convinced!

Regards

Karsten

Am Thu, 12 Oct 2006 04:33:59 +0200 schrieb Gongqin Shen
<ggshen2008@gmail.com>:

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Subject: Re: IDL's built-in function DILATE and ERODE doesn't work as described in help

Posted by [Haje Korth](#) on Thu, 12 Oct 2006 12:22:26 GMT

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Karsten,
do you have suggestions for an alternative library (C, Fortran, IDL)?

Haje

Karsten Rodenacker wrote:

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Subject: Re: IDL's built-in function DILATE and ERODE doesn't work as described in help

Posted by [Jo Klein](#) on Thu, 12 Oct 2006 13:27:31 GMT

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The same applies to LABEL_REGION, which has caused me quite some headache. IDL help doesn't even mention that restriction for label_region, and it's not available in source code to figure out. Try:

```
a=shift(dist(20),10)
```

```
b=a lt 7
```

```
tvimage,bytsc1(b),/noint
```

Then:

```
c=label_region(b)
```

```
tvimage,bytsc1(c),/noint
```

The voxels on the border are mistakenly incorporated into the background component, which is *really* dangerous when you use this to extract features (e.g. a histogram each) from different objects in an image.

I would go as far as to say this is an error in IDL.

Cheers,

Jo

Karsten Rodenacker wrote:

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Subject: Re: IDL's built-in function DILATE and ERODE doesn't work as described in help

Posted by [Karl Schultz](#) on Thu, 12 Oct 2006 14:56:26 GMT

On Thu, 12 Oct 2006 09:41:29 +0200, Karsten Rodenacker wrote:

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All I can say is that we know about this problem and fixing it is "on the list". Karsten has already sent me some more detail. If anyone else would like to submit additional input, besides what is already in this thread, email it to kschultz at ittviz dot com. Thanks!

Karl

Subject: Re: IDL's built-in function DILATE and ERODE doesn't work as described in help

Posted by gqshen2008@gmail.com on Thu, 12 Oct 2006 15:32:12 GMT

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If possible, can I know when the fix will appear in IDL? Thx.

Karl Schultz wrote:

> On Thu, 12 Oct 2006 09:41:29 +0200, Karsten Rodenacker wrote:
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Subject: Re: IDL's built-in function DILATE and ERODE doesn't work as described in help

Posted by [Karsten Rodenacker](#) on Thu, 12 Oct 2006 17:06:37 GMT

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In fact I sent mail only to Karl. Possibly the things are of interest for others, although there were not so many math. morph adepts:

Mathematical Morphology (MM) in IDL

I consider the actual state of the routines derived from math. morph. in IDL as more or less useless. MM is in fact a methodology which could be VERY helpful for image processing, provided the implementation does not it break out, what is the case in IDL. My remark comprise the actual routines

ERODE

DILATE

MORPH_DISTANCE

THIN

LABEL_REGION

WATERSHED

as well as the derivatives

MORPH_CLOSE

MORPH_GRADIENT

MORPH_HITORMISS

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MORPH_THIN

MORPH_TOPHAT

which suffer all from the insufficient implementation.

Main point which should be improved is the processing of the array border points. I had some time ago already exchange about that but seemingly the rsi counterpart did nothing know about MM. However, I am interested in MM so I try it again!

ERODE/DILATE:

Basically a result of ERODE/DILATE is the logical AND/OR respw. min/max of all pixels of the structuring element (st.e.). A border point is a point where the st.e. does contain points outside the data array. What should be done with these points? The worst is to say don't use these points, embed the data in a sufficient large data array. This is the way IDL uses. This approach is worse since the successive application of these operators is not possible or too slow. Additionally erosion and dilation are dual, with other words both should behave in the same way:

$\text{ERODE}(x, \text{st.e.}) = \text{NOT DILATE}(\text{NOT } x, \text{st.e.})$

What to do: There should be a switch, a system variable !MM.edge saying:
outside the data matrix everything is 1b/true (binary) or max(data)
(gray) OR

outside the data matrix everything is 0b/false (binary) or min(data)
(gray)

Now all border points have well defined values and duality of erosion and dilation can be preserved, no embedding is necessary, successive operations are possible and the whole MM apparatus can be implemented. See e.g. the book "Morphological Image Analysis", P. Soille, Springer

MORPH_DISTANCE

This routine suffers from the same problem. If an object is touching the border in the actual implementation border points are considered as object border points. Using the above mentioned !MM.edge morph_distance could deliver border independent results. and could be applied to the complement of the image without problem, which is often necessary!

This routine is even usable for quick erosions and dilations by thresholding the distance map as I did earlier. The neighbor_sampling keyword selects the corresponding st.e..

THIN

is quick but in MM terms completely useless, since not connectivity preserving. It should be replaced by some skeleton routines similar to WATERSHED. This comprises a skeleton, an exoskeleton, a skeleton by zones of influence (SKIZ) etc. in fact the implementation of MORPH_THIN/THICK in a loop. For large images a mask parameter restricting on the mask pixels could be helpful (also for watershed).

LABEL_REGION

Although not directly MM related it is one of the jewels of IDL (like

where and histogram). The disturbing thing is (again) the border point behavior. It is deleting a one bit border. This is understandable at times where memory restrictions were severe but today?!?. Why not replacing the border points set by the newly calculated label values? Using LABEL_REGION e.g. for filling up objects (labeling the complement, deleting the background object, (res gt 0) OR with original) would become an easy task!

WATERSHED

First: why not implementing a 3d version of it. Only the choice of the neighborhood (as pointer array in the Vincent algorithm) should be changed, very easy and very helpful.

Second: WATERSHED is a labelling algorithm, it should correspond with LABEL_REGION! I am using watershed on binary images where the border behavior of LABEL_REGION is disturbing. Connectivity keyword corresponds to st.e.!

Am Thu, 12 Oct 2006 16:56:26 +0200 schrieb Karl Schultz
<k_remove_schultz@ittvis.com>:

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Subject: Re: IDL's built-in function DILATE and ERODE doesn't work as described in help

Posted by [Karsten Rodenacker](#) on Thu, 12 Oct 2006 17:22:27 GMT

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<haje.korth@jhuapl.edu>:

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Subject: Re: IDL's built-in function DILATE and ERODE doesn't work as described in help

Posted by [btt](#) on Thu, 12 Oct 2006 18:41:15 GMT

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Karsten Rodenacker wrote:

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Hi Karsten,

I should mention that LabView's image processing does something like the !MM.edge you describe with added variations including:

- user specification of the width of the pseudo-edge pixels (the padding)
- repeating the values of the edge pixels into the pseudo-edge
- wrapping the values of the edge pixels into the pseudo-edge
- extrapolating the values of the edge-pixels into the pseudo-edge
- user defined gray value for the pseudo-edge pixels.
- and some other things I can't recall just now.

Ben

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- > See e.g. the book "Morphological Image Analysis", P. Soille, Springer
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Subject: Re: IDL's built-in function DILATE and ERODE doesn't work as described in help

Posted by [Jo Klein](#) on Fri, 13 Oct 2006 08:46:31 GMT

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Hi Karsten,

At the risk of repeating myself - it's even worse than that. It doesn't delete the border, but puts it into the first component. What if you're actually interested in that one, say, to calculate background features? It will be contaminated with portions of the other components - not nice.

Cheers,

Jo

Subject: Re: IDL's built-in function DILATE and ERODE doesn't work as described in help

Posted by [Haje Korth](#) on Fri, 13 Oct 2006 11:53:10 GMT

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Karsten,

thanks for the info. At this point I am not desperate about a solution, but I like to keep my eyes open. Fortunately for you ITTVIS is drifting more and more toward image processing. So unlike my "I want nice fonts in direct graphics" issue you have a good chance of getting that fixed eventually. :-)

Cheers,

Haje

Karsten Rodenacker wrote:

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Subject: Re: IDL's built-in function DILATE and ERODE doesn't work as described in help
Posted by [Karsten Rodenacker](#) on Fri, 13 Oct 2006 15:05:59 GMT
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Jo, I meant with deleting border points 'set to integer 0' which is infact the background.

To define connected components there has background to be defined in advance,
hence the background is NOT in the result a labelled component, even not necessarily connected!

Connected compenents start with index 1! This differs with the results of contour path where each connected border gets an entry in the info list with mark inside or outside.

However, the deletion of the border in LABEL_REGION is nasty and superfluos today!

Regards
KR

Am Fri, 13 Oct 2006 10:46:31 +0200 schrieb Jo Klein <jo_kln@yahoo.co.uk>:

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Subject: Re: IDL's built-in function DILATE and ERODE doesn't work as described in help

Posted by [Jean H.](#) on Fri, 13 Oct 2006 16:37:46 GMT

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Could one simply add a border around its image, process the "label_region" and delete the border?

Jean

Karsten Rodenacker wrote:

> Jo, I meant with deleting border points 'set to integer 0' which is
> infact the background.
> To define connected components there has background to be defined in
> advance,

> hence the background is NOT in the result a labelled component, even
> not necessarily connected!
> Connected components start with index 1! This differs with the results
> of contour path where each connected border gets an entry in the info
> list with mark inside or outside.
>
> However, the deletion of the border in LABEL_REGION is nasty and
> superfluous today!
> Regards
> KR
>
> Am Fri, 13 Oct 2006 10:46:31 +0200 schrieb Jo Klein <jo_kln@yahoo.co.uk>:
>
>>> LABEL_REGION
>>> Although not directly MM related it is one of the jewels of IDL
>>> (like where and histogram). The disturbing thing is (again) the
>>> border point behavior. It is deleting a one bit border.
>>
>> Hi Karsten,
>> At the risk of repeating myself - it's even worse than that. It
>> doesn't delete the border, but puts it into the first component. What
>> if you're actually interested in that one, say, to calculate
>> background features? It will be contaminated with portions of the
>> other components - not nice.
>> Cheers,
>> Jo
>
>
>
>

Subject: Re: IDL's built-in function DILATE and ERODE doesn't work as described in help

Posted by gqshen2008@gmail.com on Mon, 16 Oct 2006 20:21:28 GMT

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Technically speaking, we can do that, but why we use IDL at all if we have to put extra effort like that? I am sure many people here can write most of IDL's routines by themselves. What IDL should do is actually lessen the programming burden, not increase that.

Jean H. wrote:

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