
Subject: Who have an electrical book of IDL in English?

Posted by zhuangbao@gmail.com on Wed, 10 Jan 2007 01:53:29 GMT

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The help document of IDL 6.3 is not suitable for learning form scratch,

I need an English book step by step, but in my country I can't find
Who can send me an electrical edition , or give me an address to
download?

Thanks for your help.

Subject: Re: Who have an electrical book of IDL in English?

Posted by [Allan Whiteford](#) on Wed, 10 Jan 2007 13:04:20 GMT

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zhuangbao@gmail.com wrote:

> The help document of IDL 6.3 is not suitable for learning form scratch,
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> Thanks for your help.
>

<http://www.dfanning.com/store/index.php?act=viewProd&productId=4>

Subject: Re: Who have an electrical book of IDL in English?

Posted by [Kenneth Bowman](#) on Wed, 10 Jan 2007 13:58:56 GMT

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In article <1168394009.038372.98940@i39g2000hsf.googlegroups.com>,
"zhuangbao@gmail.com" <zhuangbao@gmail.com> wrote:

> The help document of IDL 6.3 is not suitable for learning form scratch,
>
> I need an English book step by step, but in my country I can't find
> Who can send me an electrical edition , or give me an address to
> download?
>
> Thanks for your help.

This books is intended for beginners

http://www.amazon.com/Introduction-Programming-IDL-Interactive-Language/dp/012088559X/sr=1-1/qid=1168437469/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1/102-7816005-7904152?ie=UTF8&s=books

If an electrical copy were available, I doubt that I would sell another book. :-)

Ken Bowman

Subject: Re: Who have an electrical book of IDL in English?
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 10 Jan 2007 14:37:23 GMT
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Kenneth Bowman writes:

> If an electrical copy were available, I doubt that I would sell another book. :-)

I used to think that. Now, I'm not so sure. :-)

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: Who have an electrical book of IDL in English?
Posted by [enod](#) on Fri, 12 Jan 2007 02:25:54 GMT
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I think you should really learn the most things from IDL's online help documents. They are designed for beginners, with a lot of examples. Try them, and you will learn a lot.

Best,
Tian

zhuangbao@gmail.com wrote:

> The help document of IDL 6.3 is not suitable for learning from scratch,
>
> I need an English book step by step, but in my country I can't find
> Who can send me an electrical edition, or give me an address to
> download?

>
> Thanks for your help.

Subject: Re: Who have an electrical book of IDL in English?
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Fri, 12 Jan 2007 02:57:20 GMT
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tianyf@gmail.com writes:

> I think you should really learn the most things from IDL's online help
> documents. They are designed for beginners, with a lot of examples. Try
> them, and you will learn a lot.

I don't doubt you will learn a lot. Whether that's the
best way to learn IDL or not, I'm not so sure. I know
when I was first learning IDL I had to read the User's
Guide front to back twice before I could figure out how
to draw a line plot. Things have improved a lot since
then, but not so much "use the on-line help" would be
my first recommendation for learning to write IDL programs. :-)

That said, I don't know how anyone writes IDL programs
without having a dual-screen monitor so that the on-line
help can be up there simultaneously with the IDLDE.

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: Who have an electrical book of IDL in English?
Posted by [zhuangbao@gmail.com](#) on Fri, 12 Jan 2007 10:16:34 GMT
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Thanks for your help, I have a Chinese tutorial of IDL now, but it's
not deep enough.
After reading the tutorial and practising the codes in it, I will read
the online help
to gain further knowledge about IDL. I am now using emacs idlwave-mode
to write
my code, it's excellent, but the function names in my editor are not

highlighted, perhaps
it is not the problem of idlwave-mode, but the problem of
font-lock-mode, do you have the
same problem? I wish your reply.
By the way, your website is really helpful.

Thanks again.

David Fanning wrote:

> tianyf@gmail.com writes:

>

>> I think you should really learn the most things from IDL's online help
>> documents. They are designed for beginners, with a lot of examples. Try
>> them, and you will learn a lot.

>

> I don't doubt you will learn a lot. Whether that's the
> *best* way to learn IDL or not, I'm not so sure. I know
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> then, but not so much "use the on-line help" would be
> my first recommendation for learning to write IDL programs. :-)

>

> That said, I don't know how anyone writes IDL programs
> without having a dual-screen monitor so that the on-line
> help can be up there simultaneously with the IDLDE.

>

> 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: Who have an electrical book of IDL in English?
Posted by [Kenneth Bowman](#) on Fri, 12 Jan 2007 14:09:25 GMT
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In article <MPG.2010a6f61904db5c989e79@news.frii.com>,
David Fanning <news@dfanning.com> wrote:

> That said, I don't know how anyone writes IDL programs
> without having a dual-screen monitor so that the on-line
> help can be up there simultaneously with the IDLDE.

One display works if it's big enough ...

Ken

Subject: Re: Who have an electrical book of IDL in English?
Posted by [Benjamin Hornberger](#) on Fri, 12 Jan 2007 15:18:02 GMT
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tianyf@gmail.com wrote:

- > I think you should really learn the most things from IDL's online help
- > documents. They are designed for beginners, with a lot of examples. Try
- > them, and you will learn a lot.

I don't think the IDL online help is designed for beginners. It's a good reference once you have an idea how IDL works, but in the beginning the amount of material presented there is just overwhelming.

In case it didn't come out clearly in one of the previous messages:
David sells a PDF version of his book (which I think is quite good for beginners -- David is just too modest to advertise it himself here):

<http://www.dfanning.com/store/index.php?act=viewProd&productId=4>

Cheers,
Benjamin

Subject: Re: Who have an electrical book of IDL in English?
Posted by [btt](#) on Fri, 12 Jan 2007 15:24:17 GMT
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David Fanning wrote:

- > tianyf@gmail.com writes:
- >
- >> I think you should really learn the most things from IDL's online help
- >> documents. They are designed for beginners, with a lot of examples. Try
- >> them, and you will learn a lot.
- >
- > I don't doubt you will learn a lot. Whether that's the
- > *best* way to learn IDL or not, I'm not so sure. I know
- > when I was first learning IDL I had to read the User's
- > Guide front to back twice before I could figure out how
- > to draw a line plot. Things have improved a lot since
- > then, but not so much "use the on-line help" would be
- > my first recommendation for learning to write IDL programs. :-)

>

Speaking of online help...

You may recall that long ago Andrew Cool and I fussed with an online help system for IDL 5.5 that used IDLWAVE resources to get around the PDF help system that was then provided with IDL.

Imagine my surprise this week when I accidentally type ...

```
IDL> xdl
```

What the heck?!?

Digging a little deeper I have found that...

```
IDL> xdl, /no_block
```

while not pretty, is pretty handy. That said, I think the new online help system, regardless of what I might think of the contents, is very good.

Cheers,
Ben

> That said, I don't know how anyone writes IDL programs
> without having a dual-screen monitor so that the on-line
> help can be up there simultaneously with the IDLDE.
>
> Cheers,
>
> David

Subject: Re: Who have an electrical book of IDL in English?
Posted by [JD Smith](#) on Mon, 15 Jan 2007 17:11:39 GMT
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On Fri, 12 Jan 2007 10:24:17 -0500, Ben Tupper wrote:

> David Fanning wrote:
>> tianyf@gmail.com writes:
>>
>>> I think you should really learn the most things from IDL's online help
>>> documents. They are designed for beginners, with a lot of examples. Try
>>> them, and you will learn a lot.

```
>>
>> I don't doubt you will learn a lot. Whether that's the
>> *best* way to learn IDL or not, I'm not so sure. I know
>> when I was first learning IDL I had to read the User's
>> Guide front to back twice before I could figure out how
>> to draw a line plot. Things have improved a lot since
>> then, but not so much "use the on-line help" would be
>> my first recommendation for learning to write IDL programs. :-)
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> You may recall that long ago Andrew Cool and I fussed with an online
> help system for IDL 5.5 that used IDLWAVE resources to get around the
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> Imagine my surprise this week when I accidentally type ...
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> What the heck?!?
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> Digging a little deeper I have found that...
>
> IDL> xdl, /no_block
>
> while not pretty, is pretty handy. That said, I think the new online
> help system, regardless of what I might think of the contents, is very good.
```

That seems to parse the doc header of all !DIR/.pro routines, but doesn't display internal routines (e.g. widget_control). My old IDLWAVE stuff actually parsed the old PDF docs into HTML, trimming all the cruft, and attempting to format it readably, while skimming off routine information (calling sequence, keywords, etc.) and creating links. It was a hack, which luckily isn't needed anymore, since RSI/ITTVIS is good enough to ship with each an every IDL copy an XML catalog of their new improved HTML help system.

The way I avoid two monitors: simply summon context help as needed directly from the text in IDLWAVE with M-?. The IDL Assistant pops up with the exact topic/keyword/class/routine/sysvar/control structure/etc all queued up. Then I minimize the window and continue on.

I probably invoke C-c ? (routine info, usually to recall the quasi-random calling syntax and get argument order right) once every 1min, and M-? (context help) every 5min. They, to me, are the

"killer features" of IDLWAVE. When I program in other languages, like Perl, I really miss that functionality.

JD

Subject: Re: Who have an electrical book of IDL in English?

Posted by [Braedley](#) on Thu, 18 Jan 2007 00:01:33 GMT

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As far as I'm concerned, the online is useful when you know there's a function or procedure that does what you want, but you don't know the name of the function or the calling sequence, or if you're interested about some keywords to some of your procedure calls. As an example, XLOADCT wouldn't teach you much about colour systems in IDL. I don't think any single section in the help file can teach you as much about colour as the chapters in David's books, or the section devoted to colour on his web page. No, the help files are great for reference, but the learning curve with them are too steep to be useful as the only source for beginners.

Braedley

On Jan 11, 10:25 pm, tia...@gmail.com wrote:

> I think you should really learn the most things from IDL's online help
> documents. They are designed for beginners, with a lot of examples. Try
> them, and you will learn a lot.

>

> Best,

> Tian

>

> zhuang...@gmail.com wrote:

>> The help document of IDL 6.3 is not suitable for learning from scratch,

>

>> I need an English book step by step, but in my country I can't find

>> Who can send me an electrical edition, or give me an address to

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>> Thanks for your help.
