
Subject: Re: .sav format

Posted by [Haje Korth](#) on Mon, 29 Jan 2007 13:35:05 GMT

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It's proprietary... big can of worms... don't open it ;)

<ChristopherFlorio@gmail.com> wrote in message

news:1170075059.877803.236170@j27g2000cwj.googlegroups.com.. .

> Does anybody know of documentation for the format of .sav files?

>

Subject: Re: .sav format

Posted by [Michael Galloy](#) on Mon, 29 Jan 2007 14:44:43 GMT

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ChristopherFlorio@gmail.com wrote:

> Does anybody know of documentation for the format of .sav files?

It depends on which type of .sav file you're thinking about. For data .sav files, check out the bottom of Craig's page:

<http://cow.physics.wisc.edu/~craigm/idl/cmsave.html>

For code .sav files, it is proprietary.

Mike

--

www.michaelgalloy.com

Subject: Re: .sav format

Posted by [Haje Korth](#) on Mon, 29 Jan 2007 19:04:07 GMT

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Mike,

now that you opened the can of worms... I am aware of Craig's description of how variables are stored in the sav files. However, if I remember right, the following notice was incorporated into the sav files after Craig's great discoveries:

NOTICE:

IDL Save/Restore files embody unpublished proprietary information about the IDL program. Reverse engineering of this file is therefore forbidden under the terms of the IDL End User License Agreement

(IDL EULA). All IDL users are required to read and agree to the terms of the IDL EULA at the time that they install IDL. Non-RSI supplied software that reads or writes files in the IDL Save/Restore format must have a license from Research Systems explicitly granting the right to do so. In this case, the license will be included with the software for your inspection. Please report software that does not have such a license to Research Systems, Inc.

Thus touching the sav files in any other way than using save/restore has turned into a big grey area (the can of worms). IMHO, it is easier to avoid the format if at all possible than to deal with possible legal actions.

Cheers,
Haje

"Michael Galloy" <mgalloy@gmail.com> wrote in message
news:kemdnaWXU5DBISPYnZ2dnUVZ_syunZ2d@comcast.com...
> ChristopherFlorio@gmail.com wrote:
>> Does anybody know of documentation for the format of .sav files?
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>
> Mike
> --
> www.michaelgalloy.com

Subject: Re: .sav format
Posted by [Michael Galloy](#) on Mon, 29 Jan 2007 20:08:18 GMT
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Interesting. More poking around at Craig's site, reveals the following license for CMSVLIB:

<http://cow.physics.wisc.edu/~craigm/idl/down/LICENSE.RSI>

In particular, note point 5:

; 5. Allowed use of this software is limited to reading and writing

; IDL variable related portions of IDL Save files. It may not be
; used as a basis for reverse engineering, or otherwise
; accessing any other portions of an IDL save file, including but
; not limited to, those portions that encode executable IDL
programs.
; Such use is in violation of the IDL EULA, and will be prosecuted
; to the fullest extent possible by Research Systems, Inc. It is
; permissible to read such sections of an IDL save file for the
; sole purpose of transferring it without examination or
interpretation
; to another save file.

So it appears you would need a similar license from ITTVIS for
examining data .sav files (i.e. directly examining, there is an
IDL_Savefile class in IDL 6.1 that can do a lot of this for data .sav
files anyway) and it is strictly forbidden to examine code .sav files.

Mike

--

www.michaelgalloy.com

Subject: Re: .sav format

Posted by [Craig Markwardt](#) on Sun, 04 Feb 2007 07:44:36 GMT

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"Haje Korth" <haje.korth@nospam.jhuapl.edu> writes:

> Mike,
> now that you opened the can of worms... I am aware of Craig's description
> fo how variables are stored in the sav files. However, if I remember right,
> the following notice was incorporated into the sav files after Craig's great
> discoveries:

>
> *****

> NOTICE:

>
> IDL Save/Restore files embody unpublished proprietary information
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...

> Research Systems, Inc.

> *****

>

> Thus touching the sav files in any other way than using save/restore has
> turned into a big grey area (the can of worms). IMHO, it is easier to avoid
> the format if at all possible than to deal with possible legal actions.

This warning only applies to you if you are an IDL licensee. If you

are not a licensee, then then you never agreed to the IDL EULA, and it could not apply to you.

I understand that most people here in the newsgroup are probably IDL users, but I can imagine that non-IDL programmers interfacing their own code with IDL save files could use the data unencumbered. The documentation is also unencumbered.

The claimed intent of the RSI "license" [*] included in my package was to *allow* IDL licensees to use the library I developed. And by "claimed intent," I mean the stated intent of RSI personnel at the time. Thus, everybody -- both IDL licensees and non-licensees -- can use the library and format without fear.

The "license" is not a taking away of anything, but rather an offering of permission to IDL licensees by RSI with certain conditions. If you need or want permission, then accept the conditions. If you don't need or want permission, then don't accept the conditions and proceed accordingly. There are no copyright terms in the .pro files themselves which bind to the RSI "license."

I personally think that the "license" is non-sensical. There is no reason for a person to need permission from a third party to run software obtained from another, and on their own data. However, at the time I was under threat of a lawsuit from suits at KodakCorp [+]. If including a string of text in the package could make that threat go away, then so be it.

The knowledge of the world is still net positive. Without my library, IDL save files would be utterly closed and opaque. With the library, and an acceptance of RSI's conditions, there are many more possibilities. With the freely available format documentation, there are still more possibilities. Those are a good things.

Sorry for pontificating! :-)
Craig

[*] RSI = ITTVIS
[+] Kodak = previous owners of RSI

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Craig B. Markwardt, Ph.D. EMAIL: craigmnet@REMOVEcow.physics.wisc.edu
Astrophysics, IDL, Finance, Derivatives | Remove "net" for better response
