
Subject: Paths in the Workbench

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 31 Mar 2008 16:17:07 GMT

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Folks,

Has anyone been able to make heads or tails out of how paths are managed in the IDL Workbench!? This friggin' thing is driving me CRAZY! I have basically no confidence anymore that I know what files I'm working with, unless I work with one project at a time. As a productivity enhancer (at least on operating systems I know how to use), I'd give this Workbench is a D-.

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: Paths in the Workbench

Posted by [Michael Galloy](#) on Mon, 31 Mar 2008 16:22:44 GMT

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On Mar 31, 10:17 am, David Fanning <n...@dfanning.com> wrote:

> Has anyone been able to make heads or tails out of how paths
> are managed in the IDL Workbench!? This friggin' thing is
> driving me CRAZY! I have basically no confidence anymore
> that I know what files I'm working with, unless I work
> with one project at a time. As a productivity enhancer
> (at least on operating systems I know how to use),
> I'd give this Workbench is a D-.

I do not let the Workbench manage my paths. I did have some pain until I discovered the checkbox to have the Workbench not change my path.

Mike

--

www.michaelgalloy.com

Tech-X Corporation

Software Developer II

Subject: Re: Paths in the Workbench

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 31 Mar 2008 17:03:25 GMT

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Mike writes:

- > I do not let the Workbench manage my paths. I did have some pain until
- > I discovered the checkbox to have the Workbench not change my path.

I have been trying to give it the benefit of the doubt. If I turn every feature off (which is pretty much what I have done), then the Workbench is a worse editor than the one in IDL 6.4 and with a memory footprint 10-12 times its previous size. Please tell me there are some redeeming features I've overlooked here. :-(

Even when I'm programming, if I pause to think, some "helpful" little widget pops up in front of my cursor, obscuring my view and irritating the hell out of me. Maybe code completion is de riguer among the young generation, but damn it, I KNOW how to type! I'm just friggin' THINKING!!!

Cheers,

David

Subject: Re: Paths in the Workbench

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 31 Mar 2008 17:20:03 GMT

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- > I have been trying to give it the benefit of the doubt. If I turn
- > every feature off (which is pretty much what I have done), then the
- > Workbench is a worse editor than the one in IDL 6.4 and with a memory
- > footprint 10-12 times its previous size. Please tell me there are some
- > redeeming features I've overlooked here. :-(

Of course, I could "build" my project, which works spectacularly if I have been careful to write all my project programs as procedures. But heaven help you if you thought you needed a function. There is no way on God's green Earth you are even going to get *that* project to build correctly.

I see there is a provision for specifying your own custom build command, but I can't find hide nor hair of an example that would explain how you might do so. :-(

Cheers (but not very cheery, this morning),

David

Subject: Re: Paths in the Workbench

Posted by [Paul Van Delst\[1\]](#) on Mon, 31 Mar 2008 18:18:17 GMT

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David Fanning wrote:

>> I have been trying to give it the benefit of the doubt. If I turn
>> every feature off (which is pretty much what I have done), then the
>> Workbench is a worse editor than the one in IDL 6.4 and with a memory
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> Of course, I could "build" my project, which works spectacularly
> if I have been careful to write all my project programs as procedures.
> But heaven help you if you thought you needed a function. There is
> no way on God's green Earth you are even going to get *that* project
> to
> build correctly.

>

> I see there is a provision for specifying your own custom build
> command, but
> I can't find hide nor hair of an example that would explain how you
> might do so. :-(

It's a complete over-generalisation, but I think the younger generation eshews documentation also (and maybe rightly so, given the speed of change. Once the docs are complete they're already obsolete.)

> Cheers (but not very cheery, this morning),

Understandingly Yours,

paulv

p.s. Persistence is a virtue; and, boy-o-boy, you've got bucketloads. Persistence,
I mean. :o)

Subject: Re: Paths in the Workbench

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 31 Mar 2008 18:25:33 GMT

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Paul,

> p.s. Persistence is a virtue; and, boy-o-boy, you've got bucketloads. Persistence,
> I mean. :o)

One of *many* virtues, as I have to remind my wife almost daily. :-(

Cheers,

David

Subject: Re: Paths in the Workbench

Posted by [Michael Galloy](#) on Mon, 31 Mar 2008 18:44:21 GMT

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On Mar 31, 11:03 am, David Fanning <da...@dfanning.com> wrote:

> I have been trying to give it the benefit of the doubt. If I turn
> every feature off (which is pretty much what I have done), then the
> Workbench is a worse editor than the one in IDL 6.4 and with a memory
> footprint 10-12 times its previous size. Please tell me there are some
> redeeming features I've overlooked here. :-(

I think my perspective might be clouded by the fact that I only use the Workbench about half the time or so. For many small things, I just use a regular editor (TextMate with the IDL bundle) and the command line. I use the Workbench for debugging and when I work on larger projects (that need more help navigating). For those situations, I find the Workbench extremely valuable. But it's not going to replace TextMate for all my IDL tasks anytime soon.

My top features (over the Windows DE since the Unix benefits are greater):

1. I like that I can see the "Outline" view and not have to use a droplist to see the routines in the current file. Together with the "Project Explorer" view, it helps orient me. I use the Workbench occasionally just to navigate through a project better.
2. Clicking on a routine name like a hyperlink to take you to the definition of the routine. Just hold down the control key (command on Mac) and click on a routine call.
3. Ability to add third party plugins. ITT VIS can't possibly come up with all the different features that IDL users want (nor would it be usable with all those features). This was I can add things that are very useful for *me* (Subversion integration, C/C++ modes, etc.).
4. I like the Debug perspective. Much of my use of the workbench is

debugging. I'm not sure it has a clear advantage over the old Windows DE, but I like my layout better and there are several small features that are useful. (Please add back conditional breakpoints, though.)

My major complaint is the help system. The help is much slower and doesn't have tabs. I normally keep open the IDL 6.4 help (a silver lining that nothing changed?). This isn't too bad for me anyway since I use the command line a lot too.

Mike

--

www.michaelgalloy.com

Tech-X Corporation

Software Developer II

Subject: Re: Paths in the Workbench

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 31 Mar 2008 20:59:09 GMT

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Mike writes:

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> with all the different features that IDL users want (nor would it be
> usable with all those features). This was I can add things that are
> very useful for *me* (Subversion integration, C/C++ modes, etc.).

I've found TortoiseSNV so convenient that when I had to re-install IDL to get my file associations sorted out I decided not to bother with the Subversion plug-ins.

> 4. I like the Debug perspective. Much of my use of the workbench is
> debugging. I'm not sure it has a clear advantage over the old Windows
> DE, but I like my layout better and there are several small features
> that are useful. (Please add back conditional breakpoints, though.)

Is there any chance you could bring your computer to lunch some day soon?

I'd buy if you could show me what you like about this. I'm probably using

it completely wrong, but I can't stand being thrown into a completely different place. I've tried to turn it off, but discovered you can't, at least not totally, so my debugging is a LOT less convenient then it used to be. I'd be grateful to know how it was suppose to be done.

> My major complaint is the help system. The help is much slower and
> doesn't have tabs. I normally keep open the IDL 6.4 help (a silver
> lining that nothing changed?). This isn't too bad for me anyway since

> I use the command line a lot too.

Well, I learned how to use Bookmarks, and that's pretty useful. I start 'er up in the morning while I go milk the cow, and its ready to go when I get back. I just leave it on all day, because otherwise my blood pressure goes off the chart. :-)

Cheers,

David

Subject: Re: Paths in the Workbench
Posted by [Vince Hradil](#) on Mon, 31 Mar 2008 21:43:40 GMT
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On Mar 31, 12:20 pm, David Fanning <da...@dfanning.com> wrote:

>> I have been trying to give it the benefit of the doubt. If I turn
>> every feature off (which is pretty much what I have done), then the
>> Workbench is a worse editor than the one in IDL 6.4 and with a memory
>> footprint 10-12 times its previous size. Please tell me there are some
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> But heaven help you if you thought you needed a function. There is
> no way on God's green Earth you are even going to get *that* project
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> I see there is a provision for specifying your own custom build
> command, but
> I can't find hide nor hair of an example that would explain how you
> might do so. :-(

>

> Cheers (but not very cheery, this morning),

>

> David

David,

To use the custom build just create an idl batch file with the compile commands and save it. Then point to that batch file for the custom build.

For example, say you have a procedure called foo in foo.pro. You could make a text file called compile_foo which may contain:

```
cd, 'c:\foodir'  
PATH='c:\foodir;c:\neededbyfoodir;' + !PATH  
.comp foo  
resolve_all  
save, /routines, file='foo.sav'
```

Subject: Re: Paths in the Workbench

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 31 Mar 2008 21:51:43 GMT

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Vince writes:

```
> To use the custom build just create an idl batch file with the compile  
> commands and save it. Then point to that batch file for the custom  
> build.  
>  
> For example, say you have a procedure called foo in foo.pro. You  
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> PATH='c:\foodir;c:\neededbyfoodir;' + !PATH  
> .comp foo  
> resolve_all  
> save, /routines, file='foo.sav'
```

I wish it were that simple. Unfortunately, this particular project contains upwards of 100 files, and most of those are objects, which RESOLVE_ALL doesn't care much for. :-(

Cheers,

David

P.S. I have a feeling IDL 6.4 might be good for a few more years, no matter how much money we throw into the ITTVIS coffers.

Subject: Re: Paths in the Workbench

Posted by [Vince Hradil](#) on Mon, 31 Mar 2008 22:11:19 GMT

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On Mar 31, 4:51 pm, David Fanning <da...@dfanning.com> wrote:

```
> Vince writes:
```

>> To use the custom build just create an idl batch file with the compile
>> commands and save it. Then point to that batch file for the custom
>> build.
>
>> For example, say you have a procedure called foo in foo.pro. You
>> could make a text file called compile_foo which may contain:
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> which RESOLVE_ALL doesn't care much for. :-(
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> Cheers,
>
> David
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> P.S. I have a feeling IDL 6.4 might be good for a few more
> years, no matter how much money we thrown into the ITTVIS
> coffers.

How did you compile your routines in 6.4? You can do it the same way
in 7.0, right? I'm confused about what has changed. If you manage
your own path, you can do everything just like you used to, no?

Subject: Re: Paths in the Workbench

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 31 Mar 2008 23:19:33 GMT

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Vince Hradil writes:

> How did you compile your routines in 6.4? You can do it the same way
> in 7.0, right? I'm confused about what has changed. If you manage
> your own path, you can do everything just like you used to, no?

In IDL 6.4 I went to the tab that said Build Order and
moved all my functions to the front of the queue. It was
a pain (because you couldn't export the build order
with your project), but it worked, sorta. In IDL 7,
there is no concept of a build order.

Yes, I could create my own build file (no matter how
fraught with error *that* would be!). And I can use
Notepad as my text editor, too. But after shelling out

nearly \$5000 to be able to run the IDL Workbench, I'm just a tad disappointed with what I got for my money. :-(

Turning everything off so that it works more or less like it used to work makes me sad, and a tiny bit embarrassed for ITTVIS. I've been hanging in there for months now, trying to make this work, but it just gets worse and worse.

I've resorted to having the "startup" file for my project set the !PATH based on where the startup file actually resides on disk. If all the other folders are referenced with respect to the one the startup file is in, I can at least locate things. You just have to remember to only run the startup file once, otherwise your PATH starts to look like a UNIX PATH, with directories listed multiple times.

I make one big zip file and just ship the whole kit and caboodle off to my customer. He can install it wherever he likes, if he can just manage to find and run the startup file.

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: Paths in the Workbench

Posted by [Kenneth P. Bowman](#) on Tue, 01 Apr 2008 01:48:53 GMT

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In article <MPG.225abc5422127f1898a305@news.frii.com>,
David Fanning <news@dfanning.com> wrote:

> Folks,
>
> Has anyone been able to make heads or tails out of how paths
> are managed in the IDL Workbench!? This friggin' thing is
> driving me CRAZY! I have basically no confidence anymore
> that I know what files I'm working with, unless I work
> with one project at a time. As a productivity enhancer

> (at least on operating systems I know how to use),
> I'd give this Workbench is a D-.
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> Cheers,
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> David

Hmm, saw this in the Reg today

http://www.regdeveloper.co.uk/2008/03/31/eclipse_e4_feature_requests/

but then, I'm still at 6.4 ...

Ken

Subject: Re: Paths in the Workbench

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Tue, 01 Apr 2008 03:49:45 GMT

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Kenneth P. Bowman writes:

> Hmm, saw this in the Reg today
>
> http://www.regdeveloper.co.uk/2008/03/31/eclipse_e4_feature_requests/
>
> but then, I'm still at 6.4 ...

The IDE as an on-line application on your browser, written in JavaScript!! I suppose the on-line documentation will consist of some herky-jerky video of some guy in mouse ears trying to show you how to clean your light pen or something. I hate to say it, but I think the Golden Age of Computing is over. :-(

Cheers,

David

P.S. I'm not quite 64, but I'm beginning to feel like it. ;-)

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

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

Subject: Re: Paths in the Workbench

Posted by [Michael Galloy](#) on Tue, 01 Apr 2008 15:48:09 GMT

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On Mar 31, 2:59 pm, David Fanning <da...@dfanning.com> wrote:

> I've found TortoiseSNV so convenient that when I had to re-install
> IDL to get my file associations sorted out I decided not to bother
> with the Subversion plug-ins.

I use the command line interface a lot too, but I still find the label decorations that tell me what files have been changed useful in the Workbench. Committing with external dependencies with the Workbench plugin is also easier than with the command line interface.

>> 4. I like the Debug perspective. Much of my use of the workbench is
>> debugging. I'm not sure it has a clear advantage over the old Windows
>> DE, but I like my layout better and there are several small features
>> that are useful. (Please add back conditional breakpoints, though.)
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> Is there any chance you could bring your computer to lunch some day
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> I'd buy if you could show me what you like about this. I'm probably
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> different place. I've tried to turn it off, but discovered you can't,
> at least not totally, so my debugging is a LOT less convenient then
> it used to be. I'd be grateful to know how it was suppose to be done.

I'm trying to think of anything unusual I do for debugging. There's a couple things I thought of:

a) I don't use two different perspectives; I only use the "Debug" perspective (is this what you mean by "being thrown into a completely different place"?).

b) I have moved the views around in the "Debug" perspective quite a bit:

<http://michaelgalloy.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/04/laptop-workbench.png>

>> My major complaint is the help system. The help is much slower and
>> doesn't have tabs. I normally keep open the IDL 6.4 help (a silver
>> lining that nothing changed?). This isn't too bad for me anyway since
>> I use the command line a lot too.
>
> Well, I learned how to use Bookmarks, and that's pretty useful.

I guess the main reason this feels so slow is that the search box to type in is not present when viewing a help page. So if I'm viewing a

help page, to get to another help page I have to go to the "Index", type in what I'm looking for, and then go to that topic (and it always takes me a few seconds to realize that the arrows to expand the tree for topics that contain subtopics are broken).

Mike

--

www.michaelgalloy.com
Tech-X Corporation
Software Developer II

Subject: Re: Paths in the Workbench

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Tue, 01 Apr 2008 17:48:16 GMT

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mgalloy@gmail.com writes:

> a) I don't use two different perspectives; I only use the "Debug"
> perspective (is this what you mean by "being thrown into a completely
> different place"?).

Oh, wow! This is the secret of the Universe! Yes, this makes things a **whole** lot better. Thanks!

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.")
