
Subject: Why Persist with the IDL Workbench

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Tue, 01 Apr 2008 19:17:05 GMT

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Folks,

Now that I have my path problems sorted out (don't use the Workbench paths and don't try to set them yourself in an IDL startup file) and I've set the Debug perspective to be the one and only perspective I ever want to see on my desktop, and I've had a couple of Xantex, I can better reflect on why it is I want to persist with this damn great annoyance.

Of course, I want to feel like the thousands of dollars I shelled out to upgrade my computers to be able to run the behemoth was worth the money. But, the truth is, there are things about this editor that I actually like. I've had a hard time remembering what they are the past couple of days, but, heck, I've gone through longer periods when I didn't care for my wife all that much either, and that's coming up on a 30th year anniversary in June.

Here are a couple of things.

I like the tabs in the editor window. Makes it easy to get from one file to the other.

I like the Outline view. Makes it easy to navigate through your file.

I like the way you can click on a tab and the view fills up the window, so you can see everything in it, then just click it again to make it shrink down to its original size.

I like the line numbering.

I like the ability to make the colors pleasing to my eye. ;-)

I like the way the Project Explorer makes all my files easily accessible to me.

Sure, I wish the Workbench would get me all playful and excited over a glass of wine in the evening, like my wife, but that's probably asking a bit too much from a piece of software.

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: Why Persist with the IDL Workbench

Posted by [Paul Van Delst\[1\]](#) on Tue, 01 Apr 2008 19:50:43 GMT

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David Fanning wrote:

> Folks,

>

> Now that I have my path problems sorted out (don't use
> the Workbench paths and don't try to set them yourself
> in an IDL startup file) and I've set the Debug perspective
> to be the one and only perspective I ever want to see on
> my desktop, and I've had a couple of Xantex, I can better
> reflect on why it is I want to persist with this damn
> great annoyance.

>

> Of course, I want to feel like the thousands of dollars
> I shelled out to upgrade my computers to be able to run
> the behemoth was worth the money. But, the truth is, there
> are things about this editor that I actually like. I've
> had a hard time remembering what they are the past couple
> of days, but, heck, I've gone through longer periods when I
> didn't care for my wife all that much either, and that's
> coming up on a 30th year anniversary in June.

>

> Here are a couple of things.

Forgive my obtuseness, but remind me again what *extra* this Workbench thingy delivers?

> I like the tabs in the editor window. Makes it easy to

> get from one file to the other.

My regular old editor has that. And I can peel them off into new windows if I want (and glue them back again). And I agree: it's very handy (I like it most of all for large latex documents where I'm using \include. One window has tabs for each section of the doc. Anyway...)

> I like the Outline view. Makes it easy to navigate through

> your file.

I don't use ctags with my editor, but that sounds like the same thing (would be nice in my editor I'll admit) From what I understand, emacs does that quite well also (I've seen people do things editing ruby source in emacs that blew me away)

- > I like the way you can click on a tab and the view fills up
- > the window, so you can see everything in it, then just click
- > it again to make it shrink down to its original size.

Any old X-window does that (or something very similar) and pretty much always has done.

- > I like the line numbering.

Goodness. Haven't editors been doing that since the 80's?

- > I like the ability to make the colors pleasing to my eye. ;-)

All editors today allow one to do that too.

- > I like the way the Project Explorer makes all my files easily
- > accessible to me.

If by easily accessible you mean a dialogue opens up (ala pickfile()) allowing one to browse a directory tree, again that's available in most editors nowadays.

And, all the above applies to whatever file I'm editing (f95, idl, ruby, html, latex, etc...) I can also run system commands in my editor.. and even write my own macros (or download those from others) to do additional schneato things.

I guess the debug capabilities of the Workbench must kick ass. My "integrated debug" environment is another window where I have a debugger running, or debug output sent (except for IDL, of course. No external debugger). Works fine.

I guess my OS is my dream IDE. Infinitely customizable and portable across languages. :o)

- > Sure, I wish the Workbench would get me all playful and excited
- > over a glass of wine in the evening, like my wife, but that's
- > probably asking a bit too much from a piece of software.

Possibly. But the software shouldn't make you *need* to imbibe to stop the hands shaking once you get home. :o)

I reckon it's asking too much of single piece of software to be everything including the kitchen sink. Just my opinion, of course.

cheers,

paulv

p.s. Congrats in your 30th year.

Subject: Re: Why Persist with the IDL Workbench
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Tue, 01 Apr 2008 20:09:58 GMT
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Paul van Delst writes:

> From what I understand, emacs does that quite well also (I've seen
> people do things editing ruby source in emacs that blew me away)

EMACS is kind of like those women in the magazines
Coyote is always reading. Very nice. But it just
ain't gonna happen for me in this lifetime. Praying
for reincarnation is about the only hope I have left.

So, really, the only question worth asking is,
"Compared to what alternative?" And I'm just saying,
compared to what I've been using for nearly 20
wasted years, it's not too bad. :-)

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: Why Persist with the IDL Workbench
Posted by [Michael Galloy](#) on Tue, 01 Apr 2008 20:56:29 GMT
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On Apr 1, 1:50 pm, Paul van Delst <Paul.vanDe...@noaa.gov> wrote:
> Forgive my obtuseness, but remind me again what *extra* this Workbench thingy delivers?

Well, compared to Emacs + idlwave mode? I'm not sure if anything has
more features over that. But I would say the Workbench is a more
accessible to the new user.

>> I like the Outline view. Makes it easy to navigate through

>> your file.

>

> I don't use ctags with my editor, but that sounds like the same thing (would be nice in my editor I'll admit) From what I understand, emacs does that quite well also (I've seen people do things editing ruby source in emacs that blew me away)

I've found ctags to be a bit of a pain to setup, but yes it's basically the same thing.

>> I like the way the Project Explorer makes all my files easily accessible to me.

>

> If by easily accessible you mean a dialogue opens up (ala pickfile()) allowing one to browse a directory tree, again that's available in most editors nowadays.

It's one thing to request to see something and another to have something that is always there to browse through. I find the Project Explorer provides context that helps me situate myself in a project, whereas a popup dialog does not. Combined with the outline view, I can easily see the context of a routine's surroundings, get an overview of the entire project, etc.

> And, all the above applies to whatever file I'm editing (f95, idl, ruby, html, latex, etc...) I can also run system commands in my editor.. and even write my own macros (or download those from others) to do additional schneato things.

There are plugins for other languages and tools that can be installed for the Workbench as well.

> I guess the debug capabilities of the Workbench must kick ass. My "integrated debug" environment is another window where I have a debugger running, or debug output sent (except for IDL, of course. No external debugger). Works fine.

I regularly got myself into trouble when debugging with idlwave mode. Debugging is one of the main tasks I use the Workbench for.

> I guess my OS is my dream IDE. Infinitely customizable and portable across languages. :o)

I agree there is no replacing the flexibility and power of the Unix command line for many tasks. I just like the Workbench for some tasks.

> I reckon it's asking too much of single piece of software to be everything including the kitchen sink. Just my opinion, of course.

I agree that the Workbench doesn't solve all problems for all people. And since there is a reasonable DE on Unix and a command line for Windows now, everyone has choices.

Mike

--

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Software Developer II

Subject: Re: Why Persist with the IDL Workbench

Posted by [Matt\[2\]](#) on Tue, 01 Apr 2008 21:13:13 GMT

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"mgalloy@gmail.com" <mgalloy@gmail.com> writes:

>>> I like the Outline view. Makes it easy to navigate through

>>> your file.

>>

>> I don't use ctags with my editor, but that sounds like the same thing (would be nice in my

>> editor I'll admit) From what I understand, emacs does that quite well also (I've seen

>> people do things editing ruby source in emacs that blew me away)

>

> I've found ctags to be a bit of a pain to setup, but yes it's

> basically the same thing.

Well, I use speedbar for seeing overall directory structures of files and their contained procedures and functions. But there's also a quick folding if you just want to see what's in the file you're in, try set-selective-display:

<http://emacs.wordpress.com/2007/01/16/quick-and-dirty-code-folding/>

"I often want to hide all function bodies in a file, to get a quick summary of it contents. As it happens, you don't need any package or extra configuration for that. Just go to any source file, type

M-1 C-x \$

and magic happens! As usual, it's white magic: C-x \$ will bring your code back."

I won't get into everything, but for jumping to a function, or procedure, idlwave-find-module bound to C-c C-v is the best invention evah.

I suppose I'll stop using emacs when they stop supporting it. But I'm betting I'd stop using IDL before stopping emacs.

Matt

--

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Subject: Re: Why Persist with the IDL Workbench
Posted by [bjelley](#) on Wed, 02 Apr 2008 13:49:43 GMT
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David, that sounds like nedit to me.

And from all of the wasted time I hear about and what little I have
seen of workbench, I'll admit to using vim for a text editor over
Workbench.

Cheers,
-Ben

Benjamin Jelley, Staff Meteorologist
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