Subject: Re: IDL Help on Mac OS
Posted by David Fanning on Wed, 24 Jun 2009 15:54:08 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Kenneth P. Bowman writes:

> The whole thing is a continuous irritation.  Has anyone found
> another way to use Help that is not so intrusive?

OK, scratch the Mac from my list of potential new
computers. :-(

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 Help on Mac OS
Posted by rogass on Wed, 24 Jun 2009 16:09:08 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

I had the same problem in Windows, so scratch it also from your
list :) The problem occurs after a Java update. I contacted ITTVIS and
they recommended a fresh install of IDL. I did this and the problem
vanished. Maybe, it helps.

Regards

CR


Subject: Re: IDL Help on Mac OS
Posted by Michael Galloy on Wed, 24 Jun 2009 16:19:55 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Kenneth P. Bowman wrote:
> Does anyone else find the way IDL Help works on Mac OS as annoying as I do?
>
> Starting help from the IDl prompt puts a useless application icon in the Dock

> called idlhelpserver.darwin.universal.  Elegant name for an application, no?
>
> If I close the Help window in my browser, the idlhelpserver application does
> not quit, but I cannot use it for anything useful, like re-opening the Help
> window.  I have to go back to IDL and restart Help from the prompt.
>
> To make it even better, if I quit idlhelpserver, it *always* hangs (using
> 90% of a cpu) and I have to manually kill it.
>
> Even if I don't mind having a useless icon in my Dock, using Help interferes
> with how I typically use my web browser.
>
> Normally I close all browser windows when I am temporarily finished using it.
> If I bring it to the front it automatically opens a new window and I can
> then surf to wherever I want to go.  With the IDL Help open, however,
> if I bring the browser to the front or unhide it, the IDL Help is on top.
> This is the case even when the IDL help window was previously minimized.
> So every time I switch to my browser, I have to re-minimize the IDL help
> window and then manually open a new browser window before I can do
> anything.
>
> The whole thing is a continuous irritation.  Has anyone found
> another way to use Help that is not so intrusive?

Don't even get me started on this. My other irritation along these lines
is that if you start the IDL Workbench from the dock it puts another
workbench icon in the Dock instead of starting the one I clicked like
every other app. At this point then, almost half the icons in my Dock
are IDL related with multiple workbenches, multiple helps, and X (I
don't blame IDL for this one).

Mike
--
www.michaelgalloy.com
Associate Research Scientist
Tech-X Corporation

Subject: Re: IDL Help on Mac OS
Posted by Kenneth P. Bowman on Wed, 24 Jun 2009 18:05:09 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

In article <MPG.24abfa0d38deee0798a6fb@news.giganews.com>,
 David Fanning <news@dfanning.com> wrote:

> Kenneth P. Bowman writes:
>
>>  The whole thing is a continuous irritation.  Has anyone found

>> another way to use Help that is not so intrusive?
>
> OK, scratch the Mac from my list of potential new
> computers. :-(
>
> Cheers,
>
> David

What's so jarring about the IDL Help is that it is so un-Mac-like.  Mac applications
generally coexist peacefully and all operate in pretty much the same
way.  No other Mac application I know of operates like this.

I wouldn't mind having an IDL Help application in the Dock if it actually did
something, but this weird arrangement where there is an application with no
real user interface, while the actual help window is in the browser, is very
unintuitive to long-time Mac users.

Mainly I want to be able to hide the IDL Help 99% of the time and not have it
in my face every time I switch to my web browser.

Ken

---

## Subject: Re: IDL Help on Mac OS
Posted by JDS on Thu, 25 Jun 2009 16:00:31 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

On Jun 24, 2:05 pm, "Kenneth P. Bowman" <k-bow...@null.edu> wrote:
> In article <MPG.24abfa0d38deee0798a...@news.giganews.com>,
>   David Fanning <n...@dfanning.com> wrote:
>
>> Kenneth P. Bowman writes:
>
>>> The whole thing is a continuous irritation.  Has anyone found
>>>  another way to use Help that is not so intrusive?
>
>> OK, scratch the Mac from my list of potential new
>> computers. :-(
>
>> Cheers,
>
>> David
>
> What's so jarring about the IDL Help is that it is so un-Mac-like.  Mac applications
> generally coexist peacefully and all operate in pretty much the same
> way.  No other Mac application I know of operates like this.
>

> I wouldn't mind having an IDL Help application in the Dock if it actually did
> something, but this weird arrangement where there is an application with no
> real user interface, while the actual help window is in the browser, is very
> unintuitive to long-time Mac users.
>
> Mainly I want to be able to hide the IDL Help 99% of the time and not have it
> in my face every time I switch to my web browser.

Full agreement.  An additional irritation is it spawns a new browser
window/tab for each and every help invocation.  I have IDLWAVE working
with it (out soon I hope), and find it a fair bit less compelling than
the old Assistant.  One advantage I do note is the ability to use
bookmarks and full text searching in the browser. If you use Spaces, I
find that if you keep one browser window in the space where IDL runs,
it will target that one preferentially.  Then just remember to close
the accumulating tabs occasionally, and the irritation factor goes
down.

My understanding of how this thing actually works is:

1. Locally spawn a JAVA-based local web server bundled with IDL/
Eclipse.  Wait 10s for it to start.
2. Decompress the HTML files which are no longer bundled as stand-
alone, but in some opaque format.
3. Send a command to the browser to query the resource intensive and
completely unnecessary local web server, so that it can read a simple
HTML file recovered in step #2, and pass it off to the browser.

Compare this to the old method:

1. Use a browser (or Assistant, just a glorified browser) to look at
the local relevant HTML file.
2. There is no step 2.

That said, this is Eclipse's help system, not IDL's, so they may feel
their hands are tied.  How does it work on other OS's?

JD

---

## Subject: Re: IDL Help on Mac OS
Posted by David Fanning on Thu, 25 Jun 2009 16:20:51 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

JDS writes:

> That said, this is Eclipse's help system, not IDL's, so they may feel
> their hands are tied.  How does it work on other OS's?

Don't know. I still use the IDL 6.4 Help. :-)

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 Help on Mac OS
Posted by Michael Galloy on Thu, 25 Jun 2009 16:49:40 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

David Fanning wrote:
> JDS writes:
>
>> That said, this is Eclipse's help system, not IDL's, so they may feel
>> their hands are tied.  How does it work on other OS's?
>
> Don't know. I still use the IDL 6.4 Help. :-)

Me too. I'm wondering how long this can go on. When I need help on a
7.0-7.1 feature, I open the Workbench just to use the Help view in it.

Mike
--
www.michaelgalloy.com
Associate Research Scientist
Tech-X Corporation

---

## Subject: Re: IDL Help on Mac OS
Posted by wallabadah on Fri, 26 Jun 2009 04:21:56 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Ken - You should hardly be surprised the the IDL Help is "so un-Mac-
like" - the whole X-windows thing is pretty awful! I have the same
problem with the SWT/idlhelpserver remaining running (have to force
quit it), but I've never noticed it using a lot of CPU cycles.
I find the browser-based help to be fine - I can have one tab open
with IDL's documentation, and another open with comp.lang.idl-pvwave.

Haven't touched the whole idlde/eclipse thing in months - I prefer the
Terminal/text editor combination.

Will

---

Subject: Re: IDL Help on Mac OS
Posted by David Klassen on Fri, 26 Jun 2009 14:11:52 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

This is all VERY odd behavior---none of which I see on my Mac.  I'm
running
OSX 10.4.11 and IDL 6.4.1.  Starting help from the IDL prompt also
gives
me an icon in the dock but it's called idl_assistant and if I click
the red dot
on the upper left corner, the entire program ends (as opposed to just
the
window, which is standard Mac behavior) and the icon goes away.  And
it
doesn't do anything to any browser I use (Firefox).

What versions of stuff are you using?

On Jun 24, 11:17 am, "Kenneth P. Bowman" <k-bow...@null.edu> wrote:
> Does anyone else find the way IDL Help works on Mac OS as annoying as I do?
>
> Starting help from the IDl prompt puts a useless application icon in the Dock
> called idlhelpserver.darwin.universal.  Elegant name for an application, no?
>
> If I close the Help window in my browser, the idlhelpserver application does
> not quit, but I cannot use it for anything useful, like re-opening the Help
> window.  I have to go back to IDL and restart Help from the prompt.
>
> To make it even better, if I quit idlhelpserver, it *always* hangs (using
> 90% of a cpu) and I have to manually kill it.
>
> Even if I don't mind having a useless icon in my Dock, using Help interferes
> with how I typically use my web browser.
>
> Normally I close all browser windows when I am temporarily finished using it.
> If I bring it to the front it automatically opens a new window and I can
> then surf to wherever I want to go.  With the IDL Help open, however,
> if I bring the browser to the front or unhide it, the IDL Help is on top.
> This is the case even when the IDL help window was previously minimized.
> So every time I switch to my browser, I have to re-minimize the IDL help
> window and then manually open a new browser window before I can do
> anything.

>
> The whole thing is a continuous irritation.  Has anyone found
> another way to use Help that is not so intrusive?

---

## Subject: Re: IDL Help on Mac OS
Posted by David Fanning on Fri, 26 Jun 2009 14:18:00 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Dave Klassen writes:

> This is all VERY odd behavior---none of which I see on my Mac.  I'm
> running OSX 10.4.11 and IDL 6.4.1.

Yes, wouldn't it be wonderful if we could all go
back to IDL 5.2, but with all the bugs fixed!

Life was a lot simpler then. :-)

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 Help on Mac OS
Posted by Kenneth P. Bowman on Fri, 26 Jun 2009 15:00:32 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

In article
<f3755a83-f7d7-440c-b677-3ea69b403b9c@l35g2000pra.googlegroups.com>,
 wallabadah <write.to.wpowell@gmail.com> wrote:

> Ken - You should hardly be surprised the the IDL Help is "so un-Mac-
> like" - the whole X-windows thing is pretty awful! I have the same
> problem with the SWT/idlhelpserver remaining running (have to force
> quit it), but I've never noticed it using a lot of CPU cycles.
> I find the browser-based help to be fine - I can have one tab open
> with IDL's documentation, and another open with comp.lang.idl-pvwave.
> Haven't touched the whole idlde/eclipse thing in months - I prefer the
> Terminal/text editor combination.
>

> Will

The Help system itself (inside the browser window) seems to work pretty well.  I'm
not complaining about it.  It is the framework within which it exists that I find
so irritating.

This is IDL 7.1 running under OS X 10.5.7.  I think Help worked more smoothly even with
IDL 7.0, but the Help has changed so many times that I can't remember.

Ken

---

## Subject: Re: IDL Help on Mac OS
Posted by JDS on Fri, 26 Jun 2009 16:17:25 GMT

On Jun 25, 12:49 pm, mgalloy <mgal...@gmail.com> wrote:
> David Fanning wrote:
>> JDS writes:
>
>>>  That said, this is Eclipse's help system, not IDL's, so they may feel
>>>  their hands are tied.  How does it work on other OS's?
>
>>  Don't know. I still use the IDL 6.4 Help. :-)
>
> Me too. I'm wondering how long this can go on. When I need help on a
> 7.0-7.1 feature, I open the Workbench just to use the Help view in it.

That's pretty damning.  A standalone help app that replicates the
Workbench's internal view would do the trick, yes?

---