
Subject: Re: Help for non-RSI libraries under IDL 4.0

Posted by [twf](#) on Fri, 26 May 1995 07:00:00 GMT

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In article <3q36dl\$iid@nntp5.u.washington.edu>,
Eric Deutsch <deutsch@astro.washington.edu> writes:

> I've installed version 4.0 of IDL, and the new help system is fairly helpful,
> although just as ugly as the MS Windows help browser.
>
> However, there seems to be one terrible thing lacking: it appears to me that
> the new help system provides no support for linking other help files from
> user-created or downloaded libraries to the new help system. i.e., whereas
> in IDL 3.6 and before, help files for the JHUAPL library, etc. where
> browsable from the '?' facility, this appears to be no longer possible.
>
> Can someone point out how this can be done? I must be wrong in thinking
> that it is no longer possible to browse .HELP files...

The word from RSI is that the help files can only be created by using a
third party proprietary product. They have begun to get complaints about this
problem. The short term workaround is to use the same procedures that were
invoked by the ? before to access user libraries:

IDL> man_proc, '*'

I hope this is not the final answer. One of IDL's nicest features was the
ability to extend its functionality in a way that made the extensions seem
like they were part of the IDL package. Providing one help facility for
RSI's functions and procedures and a separate lower class help facility for
add on's is not very appealing. Perhaps the license for the help compiler is
reasonable enough to make all of this a mute point. I don't know the answer
to that.

Tom Fredian
twf@pfc.mit.edu

Subject: Re: Help for non-RSI libraries under IDL 4.0

Posted by [Eric Deutsch](#) on Sat, 27 May 1995 07:00:00 GMT

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Thanks to all (including the folks at RSI) who mailed answers to my query.
The answer seems to be that under IDL 4.0, the '?' command brings up
the snazzy new HyperHelp thingy which only includes RSI documentation.

The old widget help tool, invoked wiuth '?' under previous versions, can
now be invoked with:

IDL> widget_olh

It operates the same way as previous versions (recognizes IDL_HELP_PATH, runs without keeping the IDL> prompt, etc.) Through this tool, the .HELP files can be browsed as before.

One of the messages from RSI alluded to some possible improvements in help support for non-RSI libraries, but nothing specific was mentioned.

Also, the usual MK_LIBRARY_HELP is still available, but also undocumented like widget_olh.

Eric

Eric Deutsch email: deutsch@astro.washington.edu
Department of Astronomy Voice: (206) 616-2788
University of Washington FAX: (206) 685-0403
Box 351580 WWW: http://www.astro.washington.edu/deutsch
Seattle, WA 98195-1580 Physics/Astronomy Bldg., Room B356F
