Subject: Re: Catalyst Object Widget Hierarchy
Posted by David Fanning on Thu, 17 Dec 2009 01:40:20 GMT

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Jean-Paul Davis writes:

> Thought I'd keep this discussion here since my next question is so
> closely related: what is the purpose of the WidgetBase::ADD and
> WidgetAtom::ADD methods? When creating an object widget hierarchy
> using Catalyst, I see in your examples that you simply create the
> individual widget objects from within the top-level object's INIT or
> GUI method, using named variables for the object references only when
> needed as the parent argument to a child widget or as a property of
> the top-level object. Would there ever be any reason to "ADD" child
> widget objects to parent widget objects?

Thanks very much for your questions. It's nice to know
a year's worth (at least!) of unpaid effort is at least
interesting to someone else. :-)

To answer your question, I don't know exactly how the
WidgetBase::Add (or WidgetAtom::Add) method would be
useful. I haven't had occasion yet to use them, I don't
think. But we very deliberately over-engineered the
Catalyst framework to include functionality we couldn't
yet imagine or think we would need.

I believe I was thinking of any object in the system as
a sort of glorious widget "user value". That is, since
every object is a subclassed container widget, it can
hold as many "other" objects as you can imagine needing.

I can distinctly remember taking a shower when one
advantage of this way of thinking occurred to me. I
suddenly realized that one way of adding complexity
to images was to be able to put things on top of them
in "layers". I could have a text layer, a map grid layer,
a station data layer, and so forth. Each layer could
be turned on and off just by setting its "visibility"
property. About two hours later, with soap still in my
ears, I think, I had written the AnnotateWindow program,
which contained functionality I have never seen before
in a direct graphics program.

My point is, you just never know when something is going
to be useful. Dave Burridge has many faults (in case he
is reading this!), but one of his many strengths as a
programmer is not closing off possibilities too early

in the process. I hope I learned that from him.

> I know you've been asked before, but do you think there's even a
> remote chance that someone (you, Burridge, or even someone else) might
> ever write a book on how to use Catalyst?

Yes, I think there is a chance. I'd love to write
the book myself. But trying to write a book, hold down
a full-time job, play an occasional tennis match, and spend
time with your family is a sure-fire recipe for marital
disaster. Doing it one time nearly cost me my marriage.
So far I haven't been willing to anger the gods by attempting
it twice.

But who knows. Divorce (for any number of *other* reasons,
God knows), retirement, a better job situation so that
children who made it through college can actually leave home
and quit being a sponge on their parent's finances, and
even hitting the Lotto could all happen tomorrow. (Of course,
I would have to buy a ticket.) If they did, I'd be at that
book like a dog on a bone. Providing, of course, that
someone would be willing to pay me for it.

My biggest hope is that YOU will become interested enough to
write the book, Jean-Paul. ;-)

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: Catalyst Object Widget Hierarchy
Posted by David Fanning on Thu, 17 Dec 2009 02:24:10 GMT
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Jean-Paul Davis writes:

> I know you've been asked before, but do you think there's even a
> remote chance that someone (you, Burridge, or even someone else) might
> ever write a book on how to use Catalyst?

I've been giving this a little more thought while I
made myself an omelet and cleaned up the kitchen.

Marital bliss, or at least what passes for it at
my age, is a powerful inducement, but I don't think
it is the main reason I haven't written another IDL
book. In 2000, when I finished the 2nd Edition of my
book, I was still a True Believer in IDL.

I'm not so much anymore, and I become less so with
each new version of IDL that includes new things
that I seldom, if ever, use. I happen to be a person
who LIKES the direct graphics functionality of IDL.
It's simple, it works, ordinary people can learn to
write programs, etc. But it is obvious that ITTVIS
is not in the least bit interested in maintaining
this functionality.

So, what really holds me back, is not understanding
who will be around to read (or, more importantly,
to buy) a new book. Writing is no fun. It's consuming,
you forget to bathe, you smell all the time. Your
pajamas wear out. Friends don't want to be around
you, even when things are going well. And writing
without having a passion for your subject matter
is the worst kind of torture.

I find it hard to do that when, in the end, direct
graphics are still going to suck without decent fonts,
when you are embarrassed to tell even your friends what
you have to go through to get a filled contour plot or
even a histogram, and people who understand map
projections look at you like you were nuts.

It's overcoming that increasingly high starting
hurtle that is really holding me back. :-(

Cheers,

David

--
David Fanning, Ph.D.
Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: http://www.dfanning.com/
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On Dec 16, 6:24 pm, David Fanning <n...@dfanning.com> wrote:
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> 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.")

Hi David,
 I am a post-doc researcher doing experimental work. We usually
acquire huge amounts of 3d Data (1 set could be as big as 1GB) and we
are using IDL to treat the data. I spend most of time trouble shooting
our experimental equipment and in my spare time programming in IDL.
I've been using the Catalyst library frequently for the last 6 months,
however most of it is in a quick and dirty way. I will certainly
appreciate a book about it or at least some guidelines.
 In the Catalyst, what holds me back is the lack of time to figure out
the layers concept or how to implement mouse events easily. My plan is
to try to learn data during holidays meanwhile we wait for some repair
parts from Germany and at the same time perform some data analysis.
But I can not make any promises since we are expecting a new baby at
any moment. Everything depends when he decides to come.