

Folks,

I've decided to try a little experiment in e-commerce.

I have made up my mind to spend the next year or so producing a series of "Coyote Guides", based on the trail guides I used on my hike this summer. I envision 4-5 smallish books on various topics of interest to IDL programmers.

They are meant to be informal discussions of various topics, with lots and lots of example code. They are very personal and include my own biases, preferences, blind spots, and dumb jokes. I'm sure not everyone is going to fall in love with them. But if I manage to pull it off, it will be like taking an intensive IDL course from me.

The first book in the series and what I am working on now is a Coyote Guide to Traditional IDL Graphics. I wanted to start by working on something I was certain was going to be a great commercial success. :-)

I have several chapters in the book "finished" in the sense that I am sick to death of reading them and could use some feedback from real users. I still consider these in draft form, and there are certainly errors in every one of these chapters. Probably not so much in the code, as I test that extensively and use it to produce the figures in the book (and there are a LOT of them!), but there are errors in the text for sure. I just can't see them anymore.

Nevertheless, I think there is a great deal of terrific information in these chapters. Just to give you an example, the line plot chapter in my last book was roughly about 10 pages. The line plot chapter in this book is 60 pages, and it is probably not finished yet. Other graphics topics have grown in similar proportion. I expect this book alone might top out at 350-400 pages! I'm putting ALL my secrets in there, as I plan to retire when this project is over and drink pina colatas on the beach in Costa Rica.

So, on to my experiment. I don't have a job. I need some

cash. Tom Sawyer and his fence came to mind. :-)

Here is what I am doing. I am selling these draft chapters on my store in PDF form for \$5 each. If you mark up the chapter and send it back to me with your comments and/or you contact me with feedback about the chapter (and I really prefer hard-hitting, constructive comments about the things I've done wrong or the boneheaded mistakes I've made, rather than about the stupendous improvement I've made to your IDL productivity), then you will receive either a free PDF version of the book when it is finished, or a 25% discount on a hardcopy version of the book, plus full credit for all the chapters you already paid for.

The comments have to be reasonably substantial. "I liked it," is probably not going to get you a free anything. :-)

In addition to the "costly" chapters, I've put a couple of chapters on the store that you can download for free. For example, the very important chapter on how to work with color in IDL is there for free.

I am working on other chapters now, and I'll add them to the store when I am finished with them and if this little experiment seems to be going in a positive direction.

If you are interested, you can find the new chapters here:

<http://www.dfanning.com/store/>

As I am sure you know, this IDL newsgroup has always been an essential part of my IDL education. Pretty much everything I know about IDL I learned here, either by forcing myself to answer questions or by paying attention to what the real experts had to say. Your feedback and participation have always have always been an enormous inspiration to me. My sincerest thanks to all of you, as always.

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: New IDL Book Chapters Available
Posted by [Paul Van Delst\[1\]](#) on Mon, 08 Nov 2010 15:01:35 GMT
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Hi David,

I tried replying to the email associated with your post (news at dfanning dot com) but it was returned as undeliverable.

Anyway, when I tried to purchase your drafts (I think the line plot one), I couldn't get a secure connection. Upon reloading it "became" secure for about a second until the page completed reloading and then became only partially secure.

Any ideas if this a problem on my end (I'm using firefox on linux) or yours (or the paypal thingo)?

cheers,

paulv

David Fanning wrote:

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- > I have made up my mind to spend the next year or so
- > producing a series of "Coyote Guides", based on the
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> sincerest thanks to all of you, as always.
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> Cheers,
>
> David

Subject: Re: New IDL Book Chapters Available
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 08 Nov 2010 15:15:01 GMT
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Paul van Delst writes:

> I tried replying to the email associated with your post (news at dfanning dot com) but it was
returned as undeliverable.

Sorry, putting a real e-mail address in newsgroup articles
increased my spam mail 10-20 fold. :-(

I'm pretty easy to find. :-)

> Anyway, when I tried to purchase your drafts (I think the line plot one), I couldn't get a secure
connection. Upon
> reloading it "became" secure for about a second until the page completed reloading and then
became only partially secure.
>
> Any ideas if this a problem on my end (I'm using firefox on linux) or yours (or the paypal
thing)?

I've followed the PayPal directions explicitly. I think
the "unsecure" part of the page is my identifying text
and such. I believe ALL credit card information to be
completely secure. (One of the reasons I went to PayPal
as a credit card processor was that I wasn't certain of
my own ability to protect credit card information the
way I was doing this year's ago, before I set up the
current store.)

In any case, I have never heard of any credit card information
from any of my customers being compromised.

Even if you choose PayPal and decide for whatever reason
you don't feel comfortable going through with the transaction,
you can fax your credit card information to me and I'll

process it personally for you. As soon as I get confirmation of the sale, I shred the faxes. The dog and I are the only ones who ever see the fax, and I store NO credit card information on-site or on my computer. Can't handle the responsibility. :-)

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: New IDL Book Chapters Available

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 08 Nov 2010 15:32:05 GMT

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David Fanning writes:

- > Even if you choose PayPal and decide for whatever reason
- > you don't feel comfortable going through with the transaction,
- > you can fax your credit card information to me and I'll
- > process it personally for you

Incidentally, in case it is PayPal you fear for security reasons, when I process a credit card personally, I use another credit card processor to do so, not PayPal. This is not because I distrust PayPal in any way. This is just the first credit card processor I started with 15 years ago and I couldn't understand how to link this processor with the store without paying someone to help me.

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.

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

Subject: Re: New IDL Book Chapters Available
Posted by [Bruce Bowler](#) on Mon, 08 Nov 2010 16:11:49 GMT
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On Mon, 08 Nov 2010 08:15:01 -0700, David Fanning set fingers to keyboard and typed:

- > The dog and I are
- > the only ones who ever see the fax

Can we trust the dog not to "share the wealth" :-)

Subject: Re: New IDL Book Chapters Available
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 08 Nov 2010 16:43:53 GMT
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Bruce Bowler writes:

- > Can we trust the dog not to "share the wealth" :-)

Yes. I made the mistake of giving her a treat once when a fax came in. Now it's a miracle if I can read the darn numbers on the fax through all the slobber. I'm pretty sure this piece of paper can't be passed on to anyone else. :-(

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: New IDL Book Chapters Available
Posted by [Jeremy Bailin](#) on Tue, 09 Nov 2010 11:13:53 GMT
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On Nov 8, 11:43 am, David Fanning <n...@dfanning.com> wrote:

- > Bruce Bowler writes:
- >> Can we trust the dog not to "share the wealth" :-)
- >
- > Yes. I made the mistake of giving her a treat once

> when a fax came in. Now it's a miracle if I can
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> be passed on to anyone else. :-(
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> David
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> 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.")

Ah, but does it ever get "passed"? ;-)

-Jeremy.
