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Subject: One Reason Python is not taking over for IDL  
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 21 Dec 2011 16:33:53 GMT  
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Folks,

Here is one (probably the main) reason Python is not taking over for IDL:

<http://software-carpentry.org/2011/12/it-just-keeps-on-hurti ng/>

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.  
Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.  
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.idlcoyote.com/>  
Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

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Subject: Re: One Reason Python is not taking over for IDL  
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 21 Dec 2011 20:50:47 GMT  
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Russell writes:

> I've recently graduated to IDL >8 (specifically 8.1), and for the most  
> part everything is in good shape. I don't, on the other hand, use  
> many of the new features and largely still do things "the old  
> fashioned way" (e.g. using things like the procedural plotting  
> routines) because I work closely with people who are still using IDL  
> 7.x and we share code. I'm anxious to learn about the new features  
> (and bugs), when my collaborators catch up!

Yes, in my own informal survey, the people who  
"really like" IDL 8 fall into three groups.

80% "haven't really gotten around to using  
it yet", but they have run the demos and read  
the marketing materials.

19.5% use it, but "don't really use the new  
features all that much".

0.5% find lists and hashes to be the cat's meow.

Lord help us when the direct graphics system is cut off for good.

Still, it installs pretty good, if you're not running in on a Macintosh computer. ;-)

Cheers,

David

--

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Subject: Re: One Reason Python is not taking over for IDL

Posted by [Russell\[1\]](#) on Wed, 21 Dec 2011 21:09:25 GMT

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Well, when I first got IDL 8, I immediately ran to those marketing materials and tried all the new tricks. It was Christmas morning all over again, and I loved all my new toys. I didn't get too far into the lists, but was thrilled at the possibility of doing a way with things like

```
d = ptrarr(nobj)
for i=0,nobj-1 do d(i)=ptr_new(findgen(i+1))
```

to emulate, what is now called, a list. I tried the new graphics stuff, thought it cool, and recognized their utility (though I'm sure I'll never fully appreciate or realize their full potential); but hold onto my old routines/tricks. Again, I need to swap code with a few people for the time being -- so i'm fighting the temptation of Pandora's Box that is IDL 8. But all this talk is not helping.....

R

On Dec 21, 3:50 pm, David Fanning <n...@dfanning.com> wrote:

> Russell writes:

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>> part everything is in good shape. I don't, on the other hand, use  
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> Cheers,

>

> David

>

> --

> David Fanning, Ph.D.

> Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.

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Subject: Re: One Reason Python is not taking over for IDL  
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 21 Dec 2011 21:20:44 GMT  
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Russell writes:

> I tried the new graphics  
> stuff, thought it cool, and recognized their utility (though I'm sure  
> I'll never fully appreciate or realize their full potential);

Yes, their potential is nearly infinite. Their functionality is, well, something else. ;-)

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.  
Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.  
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.idlcoyote.com/>  
Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

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Subject: Re: One Reason Python is not taking over for IDL  
Posted by [mort.canty](#) on Thu, 22 Dec 2011 08:22:21 GMT  
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On 21 Dez., 17:33, David Fanning <n...@dfanning.com> wrote:

> Folks,  
>  
> Here is one (probably the main) reason Python is not taking  
> over for IDL:  
>  
> <http://software-carpentry.org/2011/12/it-just-keeps-on-hurting/>  
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> --  
> David Fanning, Ph.D.  
> Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.  
> Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.idlcoyote.com/>  
> Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

Dunno about Mac OSX, and I'm definitely just a windows nerd, but I've got Python 2.7 (both 32 and 64 bit) installed on Windows 7 with Eclipse/Pydev for development. Also 32 and 64 bit Numpy, Scipy, Matplotlib and GDAL. It was easy, it was free and it's beautiful.

Mort

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Subject: Re: One Reason Python is not taking over for IDL  
Posted by [penteado](#) on Sun, 25 Dec 2011 04:07:52 GMT  
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On Dec 22, 6:22 am, Mort Canty <mort.ca...@gmail.com> wrote:  
> Dunno about Mac OSX, and I'm definitely just a windows nerd, but I've  
> got Python 2.7 (both 32 and 64 bit) installed on Windows 7 with  
> Eclipse/Pydev for development. Also 32 and 64 bit Numpy, Scipy,  
> Matplotlib and GDAL. It was easy, it was free and it's beautiful.

I also do not know about Macs. In recent, decent Linux installations Python and the most standard libraries are either already installed or can be easily installed by the package managers. Having a decent IDE with an interactive debugger working (as we have in IDL) is, in my experience, often not so easy.

But when it comes to having all the (often specific) version of all the libraries that a program needs, it can be a lot of work. I just spent days trying to do it for one particular application, trying many install options, in many different OS versions, until I eventually found (by running VMs) an installation where I could get every version of every library I needed. Now I am going to install that version in the computer where I will need the software (fortunately the computer is for that single purpose, so I have the luxury of being able to choose the particular OS version to put in it).

Then there is also the Python 2 x Python 3 issue...

So in that respect I still find IDL far more convenient. Even though object graphics (in all its forms) gets severely broken when hardware renderization is not available (a common problem with old hardware on new OS versions, or with remote access).

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