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Subject: Re: idl and hardware

Posted by [thompson](#) on Tue, 12 Mar 1996 08:00:00 GMT

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Harald Schonfeld <[hs@undine.physik.uni-erlangen.de](mailto:hs@undine.physik.uni-erlangen.de)> writes:

> Hi,

> I'm absolutely new in the idl area. I just wonder if idl is mainly for  
> analyzing data or also for controlling the hardware to get the data. We would  
> need to control frame grabbers, stepping motors and some other hardware. Is it  
> sensible to do that with idl?

IDL is mainly for analysing data. However, we have used it in the past for doing some simple controlling of laboratory equipment. The most complex task we've done in that language consisted of

1. Reading from a CCD camera
2. Controlling X,Y,Z stepper motors that the camera was mounted on
3. Reading from a amp meter
4. Reading from a programmable counter

All the instruments used a GPIB interface. We used CALL\_EXTERNAL on a Sun Sparcstation to connect to C libraries to communicate with the GPIB controller. It worked pretty well, although we would hand off control to a OS/2-based PC for more sophisticated handling of the CCD camera.

Bill Thompson

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