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Subject: Re: IDL's (changing) widget behaviour  
Posted by [Robert Moss](#) on Thu, 24 Oct 1996 07:00:00 GMT  
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Stein Vidar Hagfors Haugan wrote:

>  
> \*snipped a bunch of stuff with which I sympathize\*

>  
> And, if anyone out there has some great ideas on how to save space  
> in widgets, please speak out...  
>  
> Stein Vidar

Well, I'd hardly call these `_great_` ideas, but here they are for what they are worth:

1) Allow your users to set the default font size for widgets with an environment variable. I have this bit of code in the startup file for my application:

```
; allow the user to customize the default font for widgets
fontsize = getenv( 'IDL_FONT' )
IF strlen( fontsize ) NE 2 THEN def_font = fontsize ELSE $
    def_font = 'lucidasans-'+strtrim( fontsize, 2 )
IF def_font EQ "" THEN def_font = 'lucidasans-12'
if !D.NAME eq 'X' then widget_control,default_font=def_font
```

This lets them choose a point size for the default lucida-sans font that I prefer, or set a completely different font of thier own choosing.

2) Map different parts of your interface to the same part of the screen. Yes, its not always desiriable from an aesthetic point of view, but it can save real estate. A builtin example of this can be seen in the behaviour of the SLICER or XLOADCT widget.

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This does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Texaco Inc.

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Subject: Re: IDL's (changing) widget behaviour  
Posted by [Joseph M Zawodny](#) on Thu, 24 Oct 1996 07:00:00 GMT  
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Stein Vidar Hagfors Haugan wrote:

>  
> (Here I go ranting again....)  
>  
> After we've finally got IDL 4.0.1 installed here, I'm beginning to take  
> the time required to digest the \*latest\* round of widget changes  
> (3.6 -> 4) to see what has to be done to restore the "damage", so to speak.  
>  
> One thing that's \*always\* bothered me about IDL's widgets is that  
> they seem to be designed for someone with (at least) 2k x 2k pixels  
> on their screen. Its just amazing how much "air" comes in between and  
> around every little speck of information on the screen, not to mention  
> the stupid idea of having a large, \*proportional\* font as default. Wah!.

(a few constructive criticisms edited out)

>  
> Stein Vidar

I second that and offer the following. It is not uncommon to have several levels of base\_widgets and I have noted that each one must add at least one pixel around its contents. It seems to me that a base\_widget is a conceptual construct used for organization of the widget and need not have ANY physical manifestation on the screen. In other words a button in a base\_widget ought to be the same size on the screen as a button nested in a series of 10 base\_widgets. I develop widget programs for persons who travel and their notebook computers might have 800x640 resolution if they are lucky. So, RSI, go back through all the widget code and change those "if keyword\_set()" tests to "if n\_elements() eq 0" so key=0 is valid in widget calls. Better yet, default to zero!

JMZ

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