Subject: Making help for your own functions & procedures
Posted by kaij on Thu, 08 Apr 1993 14:06:49 GMT
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n IDL 3.0.1 for WINDOWS there is very good online help-tool. Unfortunatly only the functions & procedures know by the makers of IDL are in this help-tool; there are however frequently used functions & procedures written by others that we would like to add to this help-tool. Is there a way to to do this?

Please send your answers to:

,,,
(o o)
+-----------------------oOO--(_)--OOo----------------- ----------+
| Roland Kaijen Lorentzweg 1 |
| Delft University of Technology 2628 CJ Delft |
| Applied Physics Department - Spin Imaging Group The Netherlands |
+---------- ----------+
| email kaij@si.tn.tudelft.nl voice +31-15-786708 fax +31-15-624978 |
+---------- ----------+

Subject: Re: Making help for your own functions & procedures
Posted by thompson on Tue, 13 Apr 1993 13:50:26 GMT
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deutsch@orac.stsci.edu writes:

> In article <thompson.734294880@serts.gsfc.nasa.gov>, thompson@serts.gsfc.nasa.gov (William Thompson) writes:
>> kaij@dutnsi2.tudelft.nl (Roland Kaijen) writes:
>>
>>> n IDL 3.0.1 for WINDOWS there is very good online help-tool. Unfortunatly
>>> only the functions & procedures know by the makers of IDL are in this
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>> Use the routine MK_LIBRARY_HELP in the IDL User's Library.
>>
>> Bill Thompson

> This allows one to create the .HELP files, but what if you are not allowed
> to add to the IDL_DIR/help directory? e.g. on a cluster where you are not
> the main user of IDL, how can I add .HELP entries (for use with ?)
> for me to use, but not for everyone to have to see. Can I set something
> somewhere to not only look in the IDL distribution HELP directory, but also
> one of my own (or one which applies to a certain package, etc.)

The question mark command in IDL actually calls a routine called MAN_PROC. At one point we had editted man_proc.pro to do exactly what you're talking about, but then RSI came out with the widgetized version of "?" and we gave up.

Nowadays we depend on another routine called DOC which allows us to browse through the directories in !PATH, and to extract the documentation from it. It's basically a user-friendly front-end to DOC_LIBRARY. The software works best on a widgets platform such as X-windows or Microsoft Windows, but there's also a capability of using it on less sophisticated platforms. If you want this software, please E-mail me and I'll tell you how to get it.

If you have widgets available to you (either X-windows or I believe now Microsoft Windows) you can use a routine called XDL, which does more-or-less the same thing as DOC, although somewhat differently. XDL should be supplied with the IDL distribution.

Bill Thompson

Subject: Re: Making help for your own functions & procedures
Posted by knight on Fri, 16 Apr 1993 22:17:41 GMT
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A recent thread (repeated below) concerns making help for your own functions. Here's what I do. On all functions and procedures I include a keyword help, which, when set, triggers doc_library to print the header. For example,

```
IDL> legend,/help
% Compiled module: LEGEND.
% Compiled module: DOC_LIBRARY.
% Compiled module: DL_UNIX.

----- Documentation for /usr/local/idl/lib/local/legend.pro -----
 Name:
       legend
 Purpose:
       This procedure makes a legend for a plot.  The legend can contain
       a mixture of symbols, linestyles, Hershey characters (vectorfont),
       and filled polygons (usersym).
 Examples:
       The call:
             legend,['Plus sign','Asterisk','Period'],psym=[1,2,3]
       produces:
             -----------------
             |               |
             |  + Plus sign  |
             |  * Asterisk   |
```

```
            |  . Period     |
            |               |
            -----------------
```
etc.

Placing an example just after the purpose gives a good oveview of the routine
on the first page of the doc_library output, so the user can exit from IDL's
MORE right away.

The code is simple. All that is needed in the procedure is a single line. For
example,

```
pro legend,help=help,items,linestyle=linestyle,psym=psym ...
;
; =====>> HELP
;
on_error,2
if keyword_set(help) then begin & doc_library,'legend' & return & endif
...
```

The method is simple, gives straightforward help, and promotes the inclusion of
headers in all routines.

Fred

In article <thompson.734709026@serts.gsfc.nasa.gov>, thompson@serts.gsfc.nasa.gov (William
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|>
|> Bill Thompson
--
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