
Subject: Updated IDL Programs
Posted by [davidf](#) on Mon, 20 Oct 1997 07:00:00 GMT
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Hi Folks,

I just returned to my office from about a month of gallivanting all over the globe teaching IDL classes. To say I am worn out is an understatement. But I am also extremely excited about what I have learned in the past month.

It is not unusual for people to come up to me at the end of a class with a sort of Good News/Bad News discussion. Sure, they enjoyed the class, but now they feel like they have to go back to the lab and re-write all their programs. :-(

What they don't know is that more times than I care to admit I feel **exactly** the same way. :-)

This was especially true this time. I have been playing around for several months with some new ideas for writing IDL programs. In particular, I am concerned with having programs use colors intelligently. I want programs that act identically on 8-bit and 24-bit devices. That don't get thrown a loop by some other application loading different colors in the color table, etc. I have also been struggling with how to combine object graphics programs with direct graphics programs in the same application.

While I certainly don't have all the answers, I have quite a few more than I had a month ago. (The answer to one particularly difficult problem actually occurred to me in the middle of a lecture on how this particular problem couldn't be solved. Sigh...)

Anyway, I've spent most of the weekend re-writing several of the IDL example programs on my web page to take advantage of what I now know about these topics. If any of you are interested, I would encourage you to look at the PROCESS program as a significantly re-worked program that incorporates much of my new understanding of how widget programs ought to be written. I've also updated all of my object graphics programs to look and work better.

Just a note to those of you who do not have IDL 5. It is just too much work to write programs that run in both IDL 4 and 5, especially if you want to use pointers, long filenames, and other terrific IDL 5 functionality. Since all of my teaching

and consulting work is being done on IDL 5, I have decided not to keep trying to write programs that work in both versions. I realize this is an inconvenience for many of you, but I want to continue adding to the material on my web page and this is not going to happen if I have to worry constantly about compatibility. Sorry.

As always, if you have problems with these programs or they don't work the way you think they should, I would like to know about it.

Best Regards,

David

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