
Subject: Re: Upgrade from 3.6

Posted by [David Foster](#) on Wed, 10 Jun 1998 07:00:00 GMT

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Jay E Cable wrote:

>
> Hi,
> I am looking into how much work is involved in upgrading idl. Currently
> we are using a 3.6 on a osf alpha, and would like to upgrade to the
> latest version of idl. If anyone has gone though this before, and has
> any advice or suggestions about how much work is involved, I would really
> apreachate it. We are using idl for the gui of a large software system,
> so the main interest is in how much the widgets and what not have changed.
> Thanks!
>
> -Jay
> ftjec@uaf.edu

Well, I would strongly recommend upgrading, as there are many new features that make it well worth the effort. One of the nicest features is the ability to have your IDL prompt come back after you start a program, which allows you to have multiple programs up at the same time.

As far as the amount of work it takes, consider this. When we upgraded to IDL 5.0, *every* single widget application we had no longer worked! This sounds terrible, but it really wasn't that much trouble to get things working again. Most of the changes involved moving the /MODAL keyword from XMANAGER to the TLB WIDGET_BASE call, and changes to the XMANAGER call (including the keyword /NO_BLOCK for apps that don't block events, so XMANAGER returns immediately after registering the app, and you get your IDL command-line back).

There were some minor changes in the requirements for GROUP_LEADER keyword for modal widgets. Also, the concept of "modal" widgets became more rigorous.

Plan to spend some time getting widget apps to work under 5.X; it's worth the trouble. Liam's suggestion to get a demo is a great idea; take one application and try to convert it. If you have questions feel free to call/email me and I'll be glad to help you out.

Dave

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David S. Foster      Univ. of California, San Diego  
Programmer/Analyst   Brain Image Analysis Laboratory  
foster@bial1.ucsd.edu   Department of Psychiatry

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Subject: Re: Upgrade from 3.6  
Posted by [sigma0](#) on Wed, 10 Jun 1998 07:00:00 GMT  
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On Wed, 10 Jun 1998, Liam Gumley wrote:

- > Why not just download the IDL 5.1 demo version from <ftp://ftp.rsinc.com>,
- > install it on the same machine, and try running you application? Or, you
- > can get RSI to send you the IDL 5.1 CD-ROM, which will let you run your
- > application without installing IDL on your system.

I wish! Actually, the version of osf we are running is so old that the new version of idl will not run. I tried moving the system to a sgi running idl 5.0, and everything I tested appeared to work fine. I am a little worried though that maybe there are a bunch of booby traps waiting for me though.

As for for the quality of the code, well, there is just nothing like 36k lines of uncommented, undocumented, scientific spaghetti code!

Thanks for the info!  
-Jay Cable  
[ftjec@uaf.edu](mailto:ftjec@uaf.edu)

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As far as the widgets go, it will depend on how your program was put together. You've probably got a good chance of success if you've already verified that the IDL 3.6 version of your application runs on several different platforms. However, the following items would be danger signs:

- (1) The application has only ever been run on one platform (even worse, only on a single machine),
- (2) The code is single spaced, with few comments, and every line starts in column 1,
- (3) The programmer who developed it is no longer around.

Just my \$0.02 cents worth.

Cheers,  
Liam.

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