
Subject: [Object IDL] self-documenting objects ...
Posted by [dEdmundson](#) on Fri, 31 Jul 1998 07:00:00 GMT
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I have created a number of potentially useful objects that I wish to share with others. Of course I have documented the code and written a nice comment header but it would be nice to access help online. Thus, I have adopted the convention of coding a "help" method procedure for every object I write, viz.

```
myobj = obj_new('myobject')  
myobj -> help
```

Rather than having to duplicate documentation in this method *and* the code header, can I not simply display the source header to the user? This approach has the benefit of encouraging the IDL programmer to write well-documented code headers. Comments on this convention?

Question: how can I locate the source file assuming that I know the file name (myobject__define.pro) and that it is located in the IDL_PATH? (IDL's filepath procedure gives incorrect info for user written routines.)

Any help is much appreciated.

Cheers,
Darran.

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Subject: Re: [Object IDL] self-documenting objects ...
Posted by [darran](#) on Wed, 05 Aug 1998 07:00:00 GMT
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Here is the germ of a method to include with your object definitions:

```
pro myclass::help, extra=_ex  
  r = routine_info('MYCLASS__DEFINE', /source)  
  openr, source, r.path, /get_lun  
  s = "  
  repeat begin  
    print, strmid(s,1)  
    readf, source, s  
  endrep until strmid(s,0,1) ne ';' or eof(source)
```

```
    free_lun, source  
end
```

Ensure that your object source files begin with a semicolon. Calling the help method should dump the source header (minus the leading semicolon) to your screen.

It will serve my purposes for now although I can immediately think of some issues/improvements:

- all objects should be callable with only the object name. With req'd parameters, you need to know the usage before you can access the help method - catch22.
- "help" should likely be its own object, taking a MYOBJ__DEFINE string as a keyword parameter.

Comments?

Darran.

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Subject: Re: [Object IDL] self-documenting objects ...
Posted by [mallors](#) on Thu, 06 Aug 1998 07:00:00 GMT
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On a similar note, I have a little program that generates HTML for objects, sort of like javadoc. It extracts the header, and all method definitions and writes an HTML page. See "odoc" on my web page if interested.

-bob mallozzi

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