
Subject: Request for comparisons of IDL and Matlab
Posted by [Harvey Rarback](#) on Wed, 16 Sep 1998 07:00:00 GMT
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IDL and Matlab Folks,

I have just started working at a laboratory with some expertise in Matlab and none in IDL or PV-WAVE. I have been an IDL user for a decade and am trying to decide whether I should make the effort to get the scientists and programmers to think about using IDL. I would especially appreciate any input from people who have used the latest versions of both programming environments.

Some of the features we will need:

- ability to run on OpenVMS Alpha, Windows NT, possibly Unix
- easy to develop GUIs
- a robust set of mathematical and image processing tools
- good performance

I would appreciate any constructive input.

Thanks.

--Harvey

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"We need more good people. We have enough smart people."
Dr. Laura Schlessinger

Subject: Re: Request for comparisons of IDL and Matlab
Posted by [davidf](#) on Tue, 22 Sep 1998 07:00:00 GMT
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Harvey Rarback (rarback@ssrl.slac.stanford.edu) writes:

- > I got two responses from people who had used both environments and were
- > clear that, although both languages could do what we need, Matlab was
- > easier to use and had more tools and better support.

Better support than what? This newsgroup!? Nah. :-)

David

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Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>

Subject: Re: Request for comparisons of IDL and Matlab
Posted by [Harvey Rarback](#) on Tue, 22 Sep 1998 07:00:00 GMT
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Last week I wrote in message <6tptdg\$5l\$1@nntp.Stanford.EDU>...

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> none in IDL or PV-WAVE. I have been an IDL user for a decade and am
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Do any users of IDL feel otherwise?

--Harvey

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Subject: Re: Request for comparisons of IDL and Matlab
Posted by [Steve Johnson](#) on Wed, 23 Sep 1998 07:00:00 GMT
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Anthony Wilson wrote in message <6ub8fb\$f4b\$1@pr1.plk.af.mil>...
> As a Macintosh user, I am in the process of converting from Matlab to IDL.
> In using both environments(Matlab 5.0, IDL 5.1), I have seen the following
> based on what you asked for:
>
>
>> - ability to run on OpenVMS Alpha, Windows NT, possibly Unix
>
> not sure about this for Matlab

matlab works on them and many others. not sure about idl. see <http://www.mathworks.com/products/matrix/>

>> - easy to develop GUIs
>
> Matlab's GUI creation is simple enough. It has a GUI tool that allows the
> user to create the window, text boxes, graphic boxes, etc via drag and drop.

personally, i hate guide (the matlab gui tool) and all other automagic tools. i like coding things myself. (1) i don't trust them, (2) i understand things a lot better when i do them myself, analogous to the difference between memorizing an equation and being able to derive it.

>> - a robust set of mathematical and image processing tools
>
> In looking at both software packages, I noticed that IDL has better built
> support for doing image processing and mathematical tools as compared to the
> base package of Matlab. In order to get comparable performance from Matlab,
> you will have to purchase the Image Processing Toolbox(\$\$).

\$900 for pcs, 2k for unix.

>> - good performance
>
> Both have comparable performance. I base this on some neural network

code

> that I wrote for both packages.

>

> -anthony wilson

i've written code in both, and i much prefer matlab. however, that's speaking mainly from a programming point of view. imho, the idl language is an abortion. functions have arguments (normal) and keywords (not normal). the syntax is horrendous.

otoh, in my limited use of envi, which is written in idl, there seem to be some things that envi does (presumably in idl, but possibly in c, c++ or fortran) much better than matlab, namely dealing with images (speed, smooth graphics).

overall, i'd ****DEFINITELY**** pick matlab.
