
Subject: IDL 5.2 reviews?

Posted by [fireman](#) on Thu, 29 Oct 1998 08:00:00 GMT

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Now that IDL 5.2 has been officially announced, I'm being asked if we should upgrade. I have what RSI sent, and the press release - where can I get more information?

Okay, you beta testers, spill.

You know who you are:

David Fanning
Robert S. Mallozzi
Matt Sheats
(who else?)

Thanks!

--

---- Gwyn F. Fireman
---- General Sciences Corporation
---- MODIS Characterization Support Team
---- Gwyn.Fireman@gsfc.nasa.gov 301-352-2118

Subject: Re: IDL 5.2 reviews?

Posted by [davidf](#) on Tue, 03 Nov 1998 08:00:00 GMT

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Allan Beihl (beihl@ti.com) writes:

> Along these lines, does any one know if there are any Foundation Classes for
> IDL, like MFC for windows or JFC/Swing for Java?
>
> It would be nice to have some classes that encapsulated applications, windows,
> ect. Then all one would have to do is derive the app and windows and override
> any events they would want to catch, instead of writing and rewriting the same
> UI code....

Ah, well, it's not a Foundation Class, but this is the whole purpose of my program XWINDOW.

<http://www.dfanning.com/programs/xwindow.pro>

I *always* want resizable graphics windows that can send the contents of the window to a PostScript, JPEG, GIF file etc. Here is a program that can do that for *any* IDL graphics procedure (including any you care to invent) if

they follow four simple rules:

- (1) Are not defined with more than three positional parameters. (An unlimited number of keywords are allowed.)
- (2) Are defined with an `_EXTRA` keyword.
- (3) Do not open their own windows.
- (4) Do not use a "DEVICE, DECOMPOSED=0" command. (This is a new limitation and was exposed by the way colors now work on the PC. :-)

For example, you could use it with the `SHADE_SURF` command like this:

```
IDL> XWindow, 'Shade_Surf', dist(40), /XColors, /Output, $  
      Shades=BytScl(dist(40), Top=!D.N_Colors-1), AZ=45
```

Note, this program needs three other programs from my library to work properly:

```
http://www.dfanning.com/programs/xcolors.pro  
http://www.dfanning.com/programs/pswindow.pro  
http://www.dfanning.com/programs/ps\_form.pro
```

Taken as a whole, these programs are a "foundation class" for constructing a whole variety of applications. (I have, perhaps, just given away the whole store with respect to a very lucrative consulting business. Oh, well, now that I know how to print object graphics programs I can get into that line of work. :-)

Cheers,

David

David Fanning, Ph.D.
Fanning Software Consulting
E-Mail: davidf@dfanning.com
Phone: 970-221-0438, Toll-Free Book Orders: 1-888-461-0155
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>

Subject: Re: IDL 5.2 reviews?

Posted by [Allan Beihl](#) on Tue, 03 Nov 1998 08:00:00 GMT

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Thanks,

--

Allan Beihl
Systems Analyst
Raytheon Systems Company

The Great One wrote:

> David Foster (foster@bial1.ucsd.edu) writes:

>

>> Does anyone know when (and indeed, if) RSI plans on implementing
>> the GUI-builder on Unix systems? I'm a bit pissed that we have to
>> pay higher prices for licenses, and then are "overlooked" like
>> this. That's not what I call support.

>

> I haven't heard of any plans for a GUI-builder on anything
> but Windows platforms, but RSI doesn't usually share this
> kind of information with me as a rule. You should ask them.

>

> If you would be interested in trying an Application-
> builder (that is, a builder that not only allowed you to
> build the GUI interface, but also allowed you to write
> IDL code either in the builder or in IDL, etc.) on
> a UNIX platform, let me know. I may be able to help you
> out. What I have in mind wouldn't be free, unfortunately,
> but it *would* run on Windows and UNIX machines. :-)

>

> Cheers,

>

> David

>

> -----

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Subject: Re: IDL 5.2 reviews?

Posted by [David Foster](#) on Tue, 03 Nov 1998 08:00:00 GMT

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David Fanning wrote:

>
> Gwyn Fireman (fireman@magictrick.gsfc.nasa.gov) writes:
>
>> Now that IDL 5.2 has been officially announced, I'm being asked if we
>> should upgrade. I have what RSI sent, and the press release - where
>> can I get more information?

>

> If I get the OK I might chat about the new GUI-builder.
> There are lots of things I like about it. And a couple
> of things I wish were there but aren't (yet).
>

Does anyone know when (and indeed, if) RSI plans on implementing the GUI-builder on Unix systems? I'm a bit pissed that we have to pay higher prices for licenses, and then are "overlooked" like this. That's not what I call support.

Dave

--

~~~~~  
David S. Foster      Univ. of California, San Diego  
Programmer/Analyst   Brain Image Analysis Laboratory  
foster@bial1.ucsd.edu   Department of Psychiatry  
(619) 622-5892      8950 Via La Jolla Drive, Suite 2240  
La Jolla, CA 92037  
~~~~~

Subject: Re: IDL 5.2 reviews?

Posted by [Randall Smith](#) on Wed, 04 Nov 1998 08:00:00 GMT

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davidf@dfanning.com (David Fanning) writes:

>
> Gwyn Fireman (fireman@magictrick.gsfc.nasa.gov) writes:
>
>> Now that IDL 5.2 has been officially announced, I'm being asked if we
>> should upgrade. I have what RSI sent, and the press release - where
>> can I get more information?
>
> I will say this about IDL 5.2 (whether I am supposed to
> or not): if you work for NASA and you don't get this
> upgrade you must be working in the backwaters and are
> about to lose your funding. If this upgrade is not named
> the "NASA upgrade" internally, then it ought to be. I can't
> imagine a group of people better suited to using its new
> functionality. Consider just file formats for a moment: TIFF++,
> GeoTIFF, PNG, HDF+, HDF-EOS. That list, along with unsigned
> integers, has to have NASA types drooling. :-)
>

Well, speaking as an ex-NASA postdoc, yes, having those file formats is terrific but RSI had better watch the cost, especially for the

small-time Unix users. I had some serious problems convincing my boss to go for the upgrade to v5, and many new Unix workstations are now IDL-free, at least where I was. When the cost of a new IDL license is 50% of the workstation cost, leaving it off starts sounding better and better.

This doesn't really affect places where there is a "systems group" that handles computer purchases and that ensures that all is well. But at least in the research groups, more and more computers are bought simply on research grants that have finite budgets. And these research groups eventually propose the multi-million dollar projects that buy IDL as a matter of course. Unless, of course, the underlying research group couldn't afford IDL before, and so nobody bothers to buy it now. It's a slow-brewing problem, though--one that won't show it's head until it's too late to do anything.

Randall Smith
rsmith@cfa.harvard.edu

Subject: Re: IDL 5.2 reviews?

Posted by [rmlongfield](#) on Thu, 05 Nov 1998 08:00:00 GMT

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In article <owg1bz33so.fsf@kracko.harvard.edu>,

Randall Smith <rsmith@kracko.harvard.edu> wrote:

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> buy it now. It's a slow-brewing problem, though--one that won't show
> it's head until it's too late to do anything.

>

> Randall Smith
> rsmith@cfa.harvard.edu

>

Just some thoughts on the cost of IDL. I am part of a small research group which is part of the Netherlands weather forecasting service. We just had a meeting with the CREASO people (who represent RSI in Europe) to try and get some sort of deal because we needed more licenses and the cost is very high. Well, they felt that the market justifies the cost and that other companies were paying the high cost, so we should too. We could not convince them that a non-profit organization has less money to throw around than a car company. My feeling from this meeting was that we weren't buying enough licenses for them to feel threatened if we decide to abandon IDL. It would be nice if they had something in between a university license (which was relatively cheap) and a company license. I don't know. I like IDL mostly because this is what I had to use when I got here (My other choice was SGI's Explorer) and widgets are fun. Mathlib was mentioned as a competitor but I don't know much about it except for a few comments on this usergroup. Well, enough said...Back to my widgets!

Rose

p.s. Please, David Fanning, don't mention age as a handicap. Some of us are older than you might think. ;-) My feeling, one is old the moment he or she decides that learning something new is too much trouble.

-----== Posted via Deja News, The Discussion Network ==-----
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Subject: Re: IDL 5.2 reviews?

Posted by [davidf7203](#) on Fri, 06 Nov 1998 08:00:00 GMT

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Mike Schienle writes:

> If it's any consolation David, I can honestly say you don't
> look a day over 60.

Yeah. Especially with my glasses. I got the "Bill Clinton" model, thinking... Well, let's just say I still don't feel any younger.

But, honestly people, can we get back to business here.
(I can always tell when I'm working on a project that isn't going very well. I spend all my time doing this nonsense.)

Hey! How about that GUI Builder!? Anyone using it? :-)

Cheers,

David

-----== Posted via Deja News, The Discussion Network ==-----
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Subject: Re: IDL 5.2 reviews?
Posted by [mgs](#) on Fri, 06 Nov 1998 08:00:00 GMT
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In article <71tv0t\$765\$1@nnrp1.dejanews.com>, davidf7203@my-dejanews.com wrote:

> Rose writes:
>
>> p.s. Please, David Fanning, don't mention age as a handicap. Some of us are
>> older than you might think. ;-) My feeling, one is old the moment he or she
>> decides that learning something new is too much trouble.
>
> Yes, age is not a handicap. *Feeling* old may be, however. :-)

If it's any consolation David, I can honestly say you don't look a day over 60.

--

Mike Schienle
mgs@ivsoftware.com

Interactive Visuals, LLC
<http://www.ivsoftware.com/>

Subject: Re: IDL 5.2 reviews?
Posted by [davidf7203](#) on Fri, 06 Nov 1998 08:00:00 GMT
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Philip Aldis <teal@dera.gov.uk> writes:

> The only reason I'm able to answer the questions
> is because I was taught by the best.

You're a good man, Philip. Are you looking for a job?
Dick and I have been thinking about expanding our
international operations. :-)

Cheers,

David

Subject: Re: IDL 5.2 reviews?

Posted by [philip aldis](#) on Fri, 06 Nov 1998 08:00:00 GMT

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davidf7203@my-dejanews.com wrote:

> I'm just feeling out of sorts because I've had to get a
> pair of spectacles and everytime I want to read something
> I've left the damn things in another room and I spend half
> an hour looking around for them. And then I see this young
> lad, Phillip, who has been programming IDL for all of about two
> weeks answering quesitons that would take me almost two
> weeks to research, what with the fumbling around for my
> glasses and all, and I just think... Well, it doesn't matter
> what I think. I'll just go get my slippers and drink a warm glass
> of milk before I go to bed. :-(
>
> Cheers,
>
> David
>

The only reason I'm able to answer the questions is because I was taught by the best.

cheers for a good start to my IDL experience,
young lad Phil Aldis

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