
Subject: Where should I put a preferences file?
Posted by [Liam Gumley](#) on Fri, 13 Nov 1998 08:00:00 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

I have an IDL application in which it would be useful to store a preferences file for each session. For example, this would allow the application to remember the last 4 data files loaded.

On a Unix system, the name and location for this file would be something like

"\$HOME/.idlapp"

However my application needs to run on Windows and Macintosh systems as well. Is there a standard file name/location I can use on Win and Mac systems?

Cheers,
Liam.

Liam E. Gumley
Space Science and Engineering Center, UW-Madison
1225 W. Dayton St., Madison WI 53706, USA
Phone (608) 265-5358, Fax (608) 262-5974
<http://cimss.ssec.wisc.edu/~gumley>

Subject: Re: Where should I put a preferences file?
Posted by [J.D. Smith](#) on Fri, 13 Nov 1998 08:00:00 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Liam Gumley wrote:

>
> I have an IDL application in which it would be useful to store a
> preferences file for each session. For example, this would allow the
> application to remember the last 4 data files loaded.
>
> On a Unix system, the name and location for this file would be something
> like
>
> "\$HOME/.idlapp"
>
> However my application needs to run on Windows and Macintosh systems as
> well. Is there a standard file name/location I can use on Win and Mac
> systems?
>
> Cheers,

> Liam.
>
> ---
> Liam E. Gumley
> Space Science and Engineering Center, UW-Madison
> 1225 W. Dayton St., Madison WI 53706, USA
> Phone (608) 265-5358, Fax (608) 262-5974
> <http://cimss.ssec.wisc.edu/~gumley>

I always use !DIR + sep + 'this_pref' where sep is defined correctly '\n' or ':'. For unix I usually use getenv('HOME')+'/'+'this_pref'. Since IDL includes no intrinsic (read portable) way to create directories, you must use the one included by default in all IDL sessions. This can get to be bothersome for a large collection of preference files, and therefore it seems that the ability for IDL to create and check on the existence of directories in a system-generic way would be valuable.

JD

--

J.D. Smith |*| WORK: (607) 255-5842
Cornell University Dept. of Astronomy |*| (607) 255-6263
304 Space Sciences Bldg. |*| FAX: (607) 255-5875
Ithaca, NY 14853 |*|

Subject: Re: Where should I put a preferences file?
Posted by [Martin Schultz](#) on Sat, 14 Nov 1998 08:00:00 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

J.D. Smith wrote:

> Liam Gumley wrote:
>>
>> I have an IDL application in which it would be useful to store a
>> preferences file for each session. For example, this would allow the
>> application to remember the last 4 data files loaded.
>> [...]

How about looking for the IDL startup file (providing you use an identical name like idl_startup.pro everywhere -- or you query getenv('IDL_STARTUP')) and put your preferences file in that same directory. I always dislike cluttering my \$HOME directory with "selfmade" files, and assuming a hard-wired directory name for any users' IDL applications seems risky, too.

If you wish, you can download file_exist.pro and extract_path.pro from my web page (see below); the first retrieves the fully qualified path for a file in a list of directories (just pass !PATH here, so it will automatically be platform dependent [pun intended]), and the latter cuts out the directory

portion of that full path. But you'll probably have something like this on your own ...

Regards,

Martin.

--

Dr. Martin Schultz
Department for Engineering&Applied Sciences, Harvard University
109 Pierce Hall, 29 Oxford St., Cambridge, MA-02138, USA

phone: (617)-496-8318

fax : (617)-495-4551

e-mail: mgs@io.harvard.edu

Internet-homepage: <http://www-as.harvard.edu/people/staff/mgs/idl/>
