



iTool Developer's Guide

RSI

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Chapter 1

Overview of iTools

This chapter provides an overview of the IDL iTool Component Framework.

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What are iTools?

IDL *Intelligent Tools*, or *iTools*, are applications written in IDL to perform a variety of data analysis and visualization tasks. iTools share a common underlying application framework, presenting a full-featured, customizable, application-like user interface with menus, toolbars, and other graphical features. Several predefined iTools are provided along with IDL; you can use these tools to explore and visualize your data without writing any new code yourself. For information on using the standard iTools provided with IDL, see the *iTool User's Guide*.

But iTools are more than just a set of pre-written IDL programs. Behind the iTool system lies the IDL Intelligent Tools Component Framework — a set of object class files and associated utilities designed to allow you to easily extend the supplied toolset or create entirely new tools of your own. This manual will help you understand the iTools Component Framework so that you can customize existing iTools or create entirely new ones.

What is the iTools Component Framework?

The iTools component framework is a set of object class definitions written in the IDL language. It is designed to facilitate the development of sophisticated visualization tools by providing a set of pre-built components that provide standard features including:

- creation of visualization graphics
- mouse manipulations of visualization graphics
- annotations
- management of visualization and application properties
- undo/redo capabilities
- data import and export
- printing
- data filtering and manipulation
- interface element event handling

In addition, the iTools component framework makes it easy to extend the system with components of your own creation, allowing you to design a tool to manipulate and display your data in any way you choose.

Advantages of Using the Framework

If you are accustomed to creating user interfaces for your IDL applications using IDL widgets, using the iTools component framework will shorten your development time by providing much of the application interface via the standard component building blocks. In many cases, you are freed entirely from the need to create your own interface elements, handle widget events, and manage the display of data. Even when your application calls for additional user interface elements, the framework eliminates the need for you to manually create those elements that your application has in common with the standard iTool interface.

If you are accustomed to using IDL object graphics in your applications, the iTools component framework provides a streamlined way of working with the object graphics hierarchy. Many tasks, such as management of object properties and manipulation of the object model, are handled automatically.

About this Manual

The *iTool Developer's Guide* describes the IDL iTools component framework and provides examples of its use. After reading this manual, you will understand how to use the component framework to create your own intelligent tools.

This manual is divided into three parts:

Part I: [Understanding the iTools Component Framework](#)

This section describes the iTools component framework in conceptual terms, and outlines some of the processes you will use in creating new tools using the framework. While an understanding of the topics in this section may be beneficial as you develop your own applications, a complete understanding of the way the framework operates is not required to begin building your own tools.

Part II: [Using the iTools Component Framework](#)

This section walks you through the process of creating a new iTool application, either by extending an existing iTool or by building a new tool from scratch.

Part III: [Modifying the iTool User Interface](#)

This section discusses the process of adding your own interface elements to an iTool application.

What this Manual is Not

This manual is not an API reference for the iTools object classes. Reference documentation for the iTool classes, methods, and properties is located in the *IDL Reference Guide*.

This manual is *not* a complete description of the object classes that constitute the iTools component framework. We describe the object classes you will use to create new iTools, but not necessarily the building blocks from which those classes are constructed. If you desire a deeper understanding of how the component framework functions than this manual provides, you can inspect the object class definition files, which are provided in IDL `.pro` source code format in the `itools/framework` subdirectory of your IDL `lib` directory.

See “[Documented vs. Undocumented Classes](#)” on page 13 for a complete explanation of our approach to documenting the iTool component framework.

About the iTools Code Base

The iTools component framework is written almost entirely in the IDL language. The IDL code that implements both the component framework and all of the standard iTools included with IDL is available for you to inspect, copy, and learn from.

To inspect the iTools code, look in the `lib/itools` subdirectory of your IDL installation directory. The iTools code base is organized as follows:

- In the `lib/itools` directory you will find code that implements the iTool launch routines. These routines can be called directly at the IDL command line to launch a specific iTool.
- In the `lib/itools/framework` directory you will find the core iTool object class definitions and utility routines. The classes in this directory define how the iTools operate; they are made available for your inspection, but they should not be altered.
- In the `lib/itools/components` directory you will find derived iTool object classes. The classes in this directory implement the non-core features of the iTool toolset as included with IDL. You are encouraged to use these classes to implement your own iTool functionality, either by subclassing from a derived iTool object class or by modifying a copy of the class definition for a derived class.
- In the `lib/itools/ui_widgets` directory you will find the IDL code that creates an iTool user interface using IDL widgets. You may find it useful to inspect some of these routines if you are creating a side panel or a dialog used to collect parameter settings for an operation. See [Chapter 11, “iTool User Interface Architecture”](#) for additional information on creating additional user interfaces for an iTool.

Documented vs. Undocumented Classes

If you inspect the `lib/itools` directory and its subdirectories, you will notice that there are many more classes included in the iTools component framework than are documented in the *IDL Reference Guide* and in this manual. Our approach to documenting the iTools code that is included with IDL is as follows:

- iTool launch routines for iTools included in the IDL distribution are documented in the *IDL Reference Guide*. Use of the launch routines for the pre-built iTools is discussed in the *iTool User’s Guide*.

- The core iTool component framework classes used to build individual iTools, visualization types, operations, *etc.* are formally documented in the *IDL Reference Guide* and discussed in detail in this manual. If an object class, method, or property is necessary for the construction of a new iTool or component of an iTool, it is formally documented in the *IDL Reference Guide* or in this manual. Core iTool framework classes are located in the `lib/itools/framework` subdirectory of the IDL installation directory.
- Supporting iTool component framework classes — those used to implement the documented component framework classes — are not formally documented. As noted previously, the code for these classes is available for inspection. Supporting iTool framework classes are located in the `lib/itools/framework` subdirectory of the IDL installation directory.
- Derived iTool classes — those used to implement individual iTools and their features — are not formally documented. These classes are derived from the formally documented classes, and as such can be understood by referring to the formal documentation. Derived iTool framework classes are located in the `lib/itools/components` subdirectory of the IDL installation directory.
- iTool user interface routines are not formally documented. These routines use standard IDL widget programming techniques, and as such can be understood by referring to the IDL widget documentation. User interface routines are located in the `lib/itools/ui_widgets` subdirectory of the IDL installation directory.

Warning on Using Undocumented Features

While you are encouraged to inspect the iTools code, and to copy or subclass from derived classes and user interface routines, be aware that classes and routines that are not formally documented are not guaranteed to remain the same from one release of IDL to the next. Keep the following points in mind when implementing your own iTools:

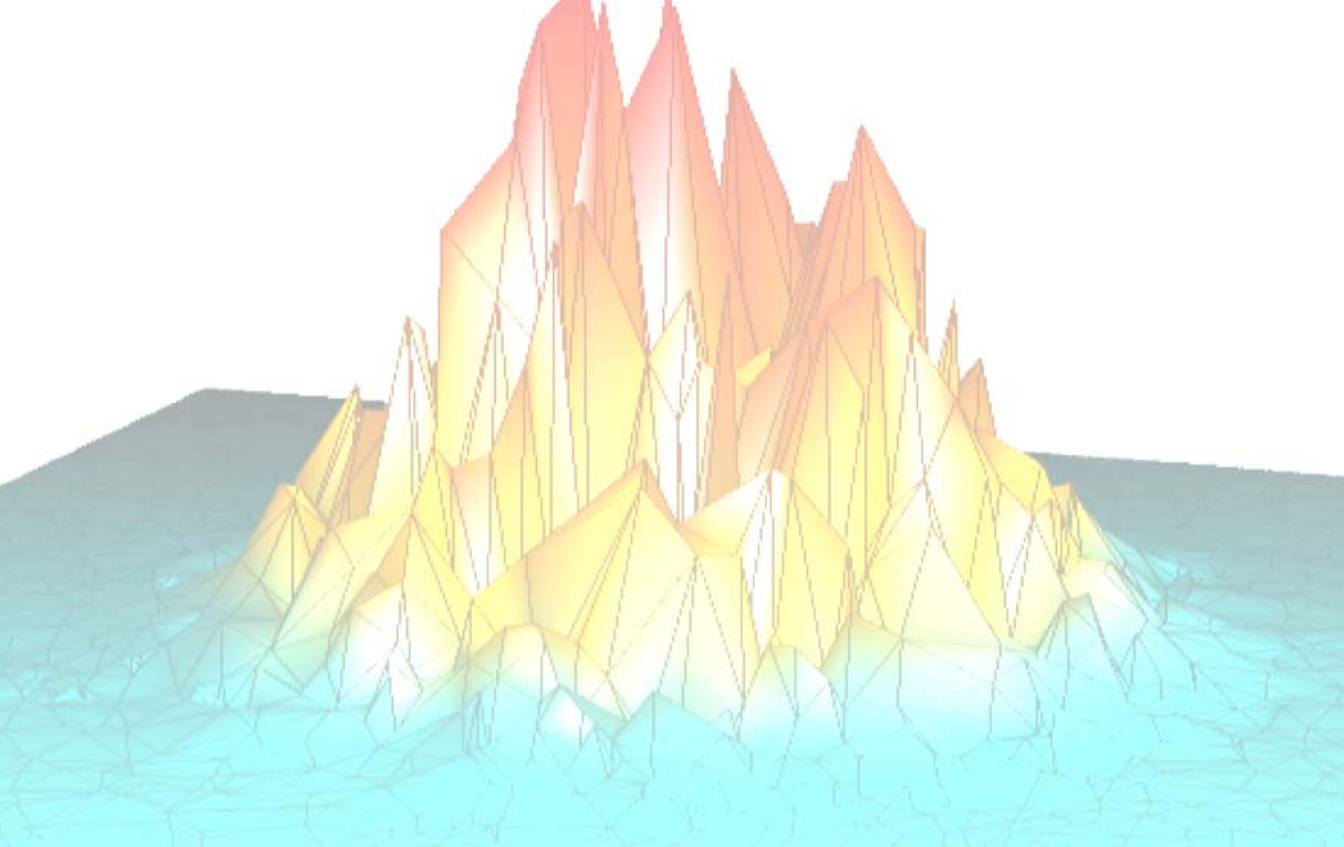
- RSI will change undocumented supporting classes as necessary to improve the iTools system.
- RSI may also change undocumented derived classes to fix problems or add functionality; in these cases, we will make every effort to preserve backwards compatibility, but this is not guaranteed.

If you create new iTool classes based only on the formally documented iTool interfaces, your tools should operate properly with future releases of IDL. If you base your tools on undocumented derived classes, minor modifications *may* be necessary to ensure future compatibility.

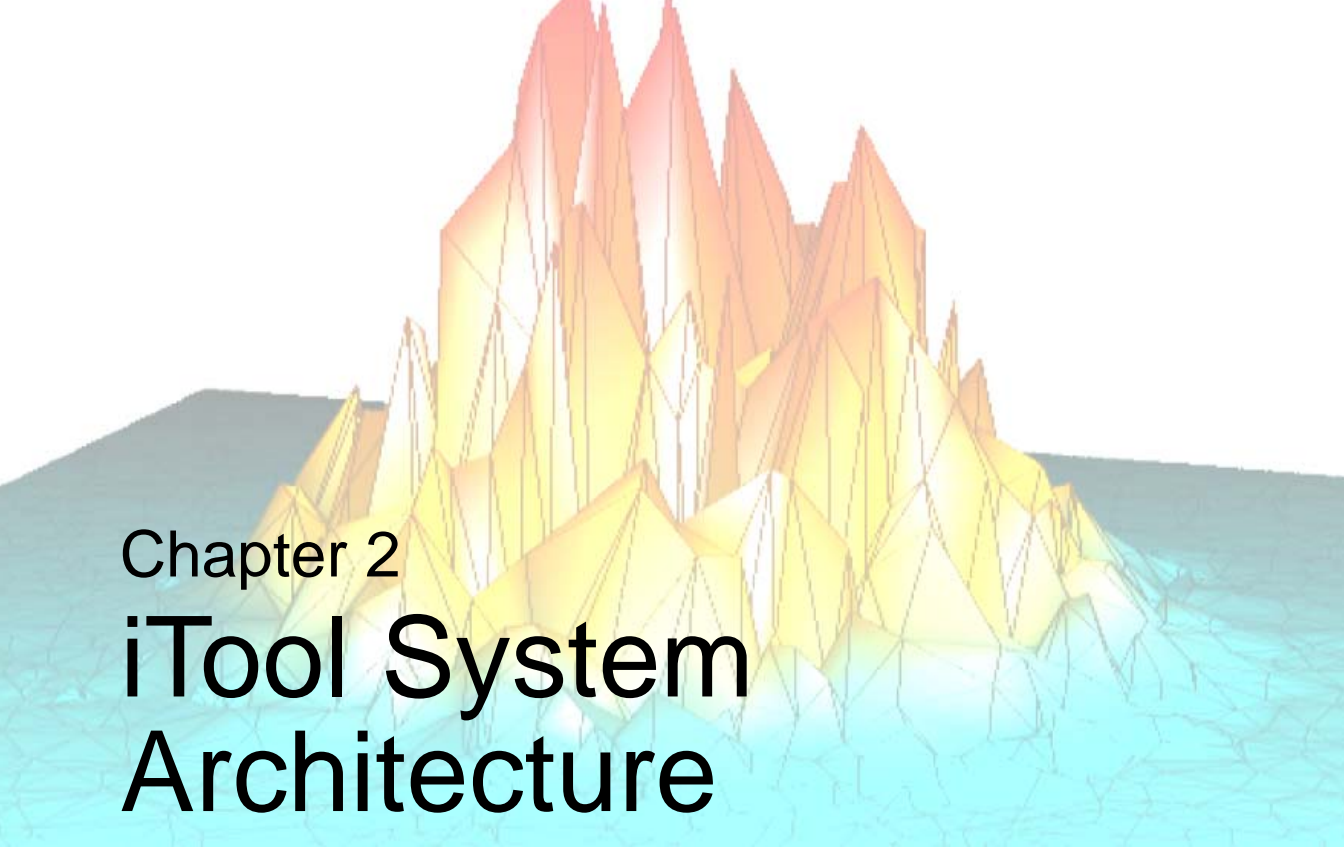
Skills Required to Use the iTools Component Framework

The iTools component framework consists of a set of IDL object classes, supplemented by utility routines. If you are already familiar with the concepts of object-oriented programming, or have written programs that use IDL object graphics, you will find the iTools framework easy to understand and use. The framework approach means that most of the details of creating a full-featured and usable application are already taken care of, leaving you free to concentrate on how best to manipulate and visualize your data.

If you are familiar with procedural programming in IDL but new to object-oriented programming, you will find developing iTools to be a gentle introduction to the topic. The iTools framework has been designed to allow IDL users with little or no experience writing object-oriented programs to easily customize and extend the basic iTool applications. While some familiarity with the concepts of object-oriented programming is necessary to successfully develop iTools, you should be able to create simple modifications of existing tools almost immediately, and more complex customizations soon thereafter.



Part I: Understanding the iTools Component Framework



Chapter 2

iTool System Architecture

This chapter describes the iTool component framework architecture.

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Overview of the iTool System Architecture

The iTool system architecture is designed to maintain a separation between the *functionality* provided by an iTool and the graphical *presentation layer* that reveals that functionality to an iTool user (the iTool user interface). Such a separation allows for the creation of different user interfaces for the same underlying functionality; while the initial iTool user interface has been created using IDL widgets, it is easy to imagine using other technologies to create an interface to the underlying iTool functionality.

To support the goal of enabling different user interfaces for a given set of iTool functionality, the iTool architecture includes the following features:

- A design in which a single iTool object (based on the IDLitTool class) contains all non-interactive tool functionality. Similarly, a single iTool object (based on the IDLitUI class) contains all user interface functionality. This division is clearly visible in the “[iTools Object Model Diagram](#)” on page 21.
- An *object identifier* system that provides a platform-neutral way to identify objects across process and machine boundaries. Additionally, the object identifier system is designed to work with existing component technologies such as COM and Java.
- A minimal connection between the non-interactive tool functionality and the presentation layer. The tool architecture provides a small set of highly abstract methods that the tool and presentation layer use to communicate with each other. This minimal connection means that the presentation layer needs only a single object reference to the iTool object itself.
- A *messaging* system that allows one component to observe another, receiving *notification messages* when the observed component changes in some way.

[This chapter](#) describes some of the core ideas of the iTool system: component inheritance, object identifiers, the iTool system object and the object hierarchy it contains, the concept of registration, and how information is passed between iTool components.

iTools Object Model Diagram

The following figure shows inheritance among the iTools component object classes that define the base functionality of all iTools. The diagram is intended to provide a visual overview of the structure of the iTools, and to provide a quick indication of the methods and properties available to objects of a given class. See the *IDL Reference Guide* for details regarding the available properties and methods of these components.

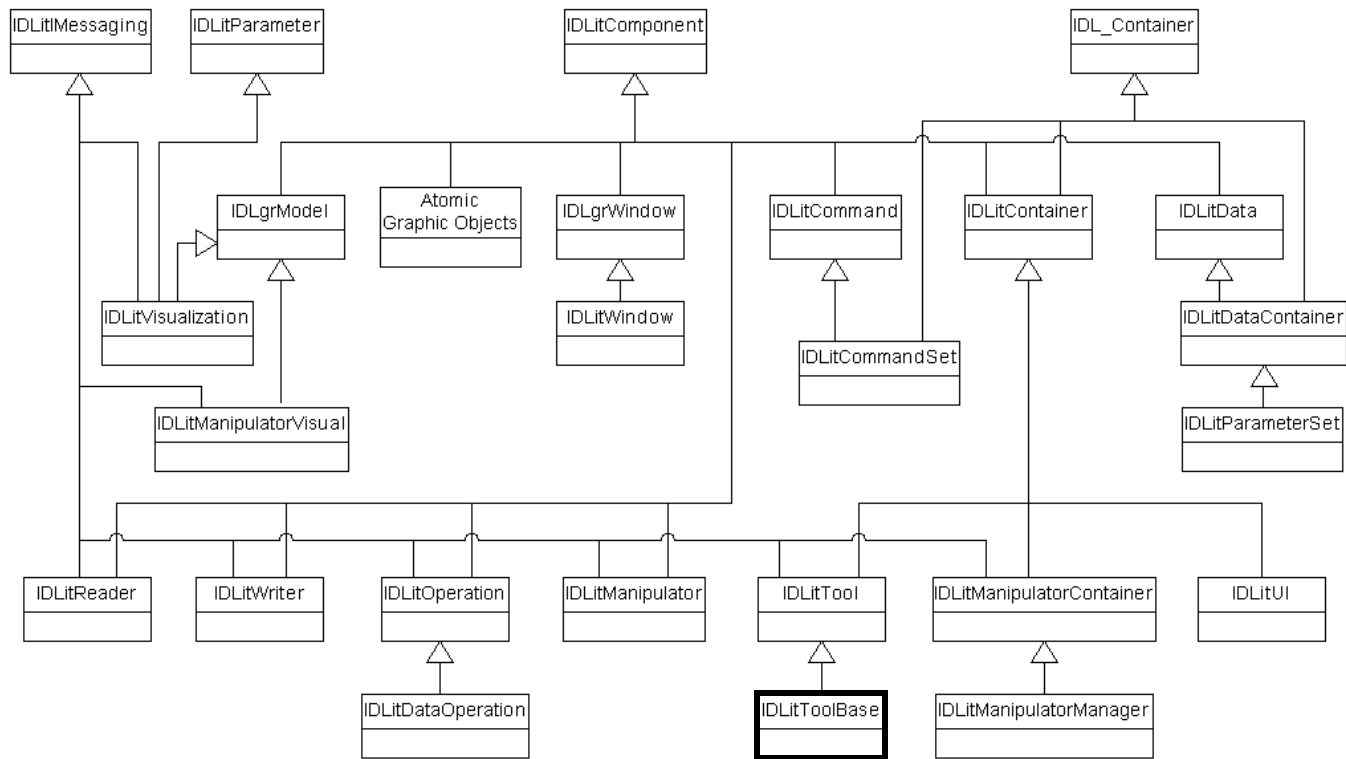


Figure 2-1: iTools Object Model Hierarchy

Every iTool is constructed using the hierarchy of predefined and documented object classes shown in the previous figure. Each of these predefined (as opposed to user-defined) object classes are available to use or customize in your iTool application. However, there is no need to create and instantiate the entire hierarchy when creating a custom iTool object.

Launching an iTool application creates instances of objects in the iTools class hierarchy, as well as others subclassed from the predefined classes. Developing an application that subclasses from the IDLitToolBase class automatically includes the functionality of parent object classes, such as IDLitTool, and IDLitIMessaging. This will also include and register manipulator and operation objects that are common among the predefined iTools. Unwanted items can be unregistered. Other predefined objects are instantiated as needed. For example, an iTool application may be started without a data argument. Only when data is imported into the tool is a predefined or custom IDLitVisualization object created to contain the data. For instance, an IDLitVisPlot object is instantiated when data is imported into the iPlot tool, which may or may not be when the tool is initiated.

Once the hierarchy of component objects have been instantiated, there is no need to maintain a long list of object references to access and manipulate individual objects. Each component is assigned an *identifier* when it is instantiated; an identifier is a simple string that can be used to access an object (such as an IDLitVisPlot object) in order to change properties, apply operations, or make other modifications. See “[iTool Object Identifiers](#)” on page 28 for details.

The following sections further describe the chain of inheritance followed by the objects that make up a particular iTool. The classes listed below are subclassed from the iTool object classes shown in the “[iTools Object Model Diagram](#)” on page 21. With the exception of the atomic graphic objects (listed in “[Atomic Graphic Objects](#)” on page 26), these subclasses are not documented and are subject to change. While we encourage you to inspect these undocumented subclasses and use them as examples when creating your own subclasses, we discourage you from subclassing from them directly.

Note

RSI may add, change, or remove undocumented subclasses of the documented iTools classes at any time. The following lists may not exactly match the set of subclasses shipped with any particular version of IDL.

Except for the atomic graphic objects, all of the classes listed below are written in the IDL language. Their definitions can be found in the `lib/itools/components` subdirectory of your IDL installation. See “[About the iTools Code Base](#)” on page 13

for additional information about iTools code and the differences between documented and undocumented classes.

IDLitVisualization Classes

The IDLitVisualization class provides methods for adding, deleting, and grouping objects within a visualization. The following predefined classes contain graphic objects and other visualizations. For example, the IDLitVisPlot is a container for plot, symbol, and selection visual objects as well as other items that as a group, provide the complete visual representation of the plot data. See [Chapter 6, “Creating a Visualization”](#) for details.

- IDLitVisAxis
- IDLitVisColorbar
- IDLitVisContour
- IDLitVisHistogram
- IDLitVisImage
- IDLitVisIntVol
- IDLitVisIsoSurface
- IDLitVisLegend
- IDLitVisLight
- IDLitVisLineProfile
- IDLitVisMapGrid
- IDLitVisPlot
- IDLitVisPlotProfile
- IDLitVisPlot3D
- IDLitVisPolygon
- IDLitVisPolyline
- IDLitVisROI
- IDLitVisShapePoint
- IDLitVisShapePolygon
- IDLitVisShapePolyline
- IDLitVisSurface
- IDLitVisText
- IDLitVisVolume

IDLitTool Classes

The IDLitTool class provides the iTools system infrastructure used by every iTool. All of the standard iTools are based on a subclass of IDLitTool called IDLitToolbase. The IDLitToolbase class provides all of the base functionality found in the standard iTools including menu items, file readers and writers, operations, and manipulators. See [“Subclassing from the IDLitToolbase Class”](#) in Chapter 5 for more information

on included functionality. See the *iTool User's Guide* for information on using individual *iTools*.

- IDLitToolContour (iContour tool)
- IDLitToolImage (iImage tool)
- IDLitToolMap (iMap tool)
- IDLitToolPlot (iPlot tool)
- IDLitToolSurface (iSurface tool)
- IDLitToolVolume (iVolume tool)
- IDLitToolVector (iVector tool)

IDLitData Classes

The IDLitData class stores core IDL data types, gets and sets data, and receives updates regarding data changes. The predefined IDLitData classes listed in the following table are designed to hold data which can then be displayed in an *iTool*. See [Chapter 3, “Data Management”](#) for details.

- IDLitDataIDLArray2D
- IDLitDataIDLArray3D
- IDLitDataIDLImage
- IDLitDataIDLImagePixels
- IDLitDataIDLPalette
- IDLitDataIDLPolyVertex
- IDLitDataIDLVector

IDLitReader Classes

The IDLitReader class contains predefined file readers that determine the type of data being accessed, and create an IDLitData object to contain the data. See [Chapter 9, “Creating a File Reader”](#) for details on creating and using file readers.

- IDLitReadASCII
- IDLitReadBinary
- IDLitReadBMP
- IDLitReadDICOM
- IDLitReadISV
- IDLitReadJPEG
- IDLitReadJPEG2000
- IDLitReadPICT
- IDLitReadPNG
- IDLitReadShapefile
- IDLitReadTIFF
- IDLitReadWAV

IDLitWriter Classes

The IDLitWriter class contains predefined file writers that export graphics or data to a file of a specified type. See [Chapter 10, “Creating a File Writer”](#) for details on creating and using file writers.

- IDLitWriteASCII
- IDLitWriteBinary
- IDLitWriteBMP
- IDLitWriteEMF
- IDLitWriteEPS
- IDLitWriteISV
- IDLitWriteJPEG
- IDLitWriteJPEG2000
- IDLitWritePICT
- IDLitWritePNG
- IDLitWriteTIFF

IDLitOperation Classes

The IDLitOperation class defines an action on data, or a change to an iTool visualization. Transaction recording provides undo/redo capabilities. See [Chapter 7, “Creating an Operation”](#) for information on creating a new operation or using predefined operations.

- IDLitOpBytscl
- IDLitOpConvolution
- IDLitOpCurveFitting
- IDLitOpSmooth

Note

There are many additional operations (named with the prefix “idlitop”) in the `lib\itools\components` subdirectory of your IDL installation.

IDLitManipulatorContainer Classes

The IDLitManipulatorContainer class provides a container for a group of manipulators, among which an active manipulator may be set. The following manipulator containers are predefined. The manipulators held within each predefined container are described in [“Predefined iTool Manipulators”](#) on page 198.

- IDLitManipArrow
- IDLitManipRange
- IDLitManipRotate

IDLitManipulator Classes

The IDLitManipulator class allows the user to select and interact with a visualization through mouse movements and keyboard events. See [Chapter 8, “Creating a Manipulator”](#) for information on the following predefined manipulators and creating a new manipulator.

- IDLitAnnotateFreehand
- IDLitAnnotateLine
- IDLitAnnotateOval
- IDLitAnnotatePolygon
- IDLitAnnotateText
- IDLitManipAnnotation
- IDLitManipCropBox
- IDLitManipImagePlane
- IDLitManipLine
- IDLitManipROIFree
- IDLitManipROIOWal
- IDLitManipROIOPoly
- IDLitManipROIRect
- IDLitManipRangeBox
- IDLitManipRangePan
- IDLitManipRangeZoom
- IDLitManipRotate3D
- IDLitManipRotateX
- IDLitManipRotateY
- IDLitManipRotateZ
- IDLitManipScale
- IDLitManipSelectBox
- IDLitManipSurfContour
- IDLitManipTranslate
- IDLitManipView
- IDLitManipViewPan
- IDLitManipViewZoom

Atomic Graphic Objects

In addition to IDLgrModel and IDLgrWindow objects shown in the [“iTools Object Model Diagram”](#) on page 21, the following IDL objects inherit from IDLitComponent:

- IDLgrAxis
- IDLgrContour
- IDLgrImage
- IDLgrLight
- IDLgrPolyline
- IDLgrROI
- IDLgrROIGroup
- IDLgrSurface

- IDLgrPlot
- IDLgrPolygon
- IDLgrText
- IDLgrVolume

iTool Object Identifiers

iTool *object identifiers* are simple strings that uniquely identify individual objects within the hierarchy of iTool objects in much the same way that a computer file system identifies files within a hierarchy of files. The object hierarchy (and, by extension, the object identifiers) also describe where information about objects is made visible in the iTool user interface; see [“iTool Object Hierarchy”](#) on page 31 for additional discussion of the iTool hierarchy and the iTool system object.

Besides providing a familiar, user-readable way to identify objects in the iTool system, object identifiers also allow iTool developers to refer to an object without having to maintain an actual object reference to that object. This ability to use a lightweight string object to refer to a potentially “heavy” object in the iTool system makes it possible to maintain a very loose coupling between the objects that implement an iTool’s functionality and those that implement its user interface. This allows for object access that can cross process and machine boundaries, paving the way for the use of the iTool system in more distributed environments.

Note

Object identifiers are not to be confused with *object descriptors*. See [“Object Descriptors”](#) on page 30 for details.

Object identifier strings are assigned when an object class is registered with either an individual iTool or with the iTool system object. See [“Registering Components”](#) on page 38 for a discussion of the registration process.

Fully-Qualified vs. Relative Identifiers

Identifiers can either be *fully qualified*, meaning that they depict the entire path from the root iTool system object to the object being identified, or *relative*, meaning they depict the path from the root of the current iTool. Fully qualified identifiers begin with the “/” character, and refer to objects that are accessible to all iTools that become active during the lifetime of the iTool system object. Relative identifiers do not begin with a “/” and refer to objects that are accessible only within a specified container object.

For example, the identifier string

```
/DATA MANAGER/MY DATA
```

refers to an object named `MY DATA`, located in the system-level `DATA MANAGER` container. Because the identifier is fully qualified, the `MY DATA` object is visible to any iTool that is active during the iTool session.

Similarly, the identifier string

```
OPERATIONS/FILTERS/MY_FILTER
```

refers to an object named `MY_FILTER`, located in a sub-container of the iTool-level `OPERATIONS` container named `FILTERS`. Because the identifier is relative, the `MY_FILTER` object is visible only to the current iTool.

Note

Object identifiers are stored as upper-case strings. Spaces are allowed.

Using Identifiers

Numerous methods defined by iTools object classes accept object identifiers as arguments to uniquely identify an object instance. This frees you as a developer from the need to obtain and keep track of an actual object reference for each object you wish to refer to or modify.

For example, the `Do SetProperty` method of the `IDLitTool` object class allows you to change the value of an object property by supplying the identifier for the object whose property is to be changed, as well as the identifier for the property itself. Similarly, the `Do Action` method of the `IDLitTool` class allows you to initiate an operation simply by supplying its identifier.

Retrieving Identifiers

At times, you may know the identifier of the object you wish to affect. This is the case when your own code registers an operation, for example; you must supply the identifier when calling the `ITREGISTER` routine or `Register` method. (See [“Registering Components”](#) on page 38 for additional details.)

Other times, you may not know the identifier of the object you wish to affect. In these cases, you have two options:

1. If your code has access to the actual object reference to the object whose identifier you need, you can use the `GetFullIdentifier` method of the `IDLitComponent` object class. See [“IDLitComponent::GetFullIdentifier”](#) in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.
2. If your code does not have access to an object reference, you can use the `FindIdentifiers` method of the `IDLitTool` object class to retrieve a list of identifiers that match a specified pattern. See [“IDLitTool::FindIdentifiers”](#) in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

Proxy Identifiers

Because the location of an object in the iTool object hierarchy corresponds to the place that object is made visible to iTool users, you may at times want an object to be located in multiple places in the iTool object hierarchy. For example, the Undo operation appears in two places in the standard iTool user interface: under the **Edit** menu and on the toolbar. Rather than duplicating the Undo operation object in each of those places in the iTool object hierarchy, we can use a *proxy* mechanism to register the same object instance with multiple object identifiers. In the case of the Undo operation, the operation itself is located in the EDIT subcontainer of the iTool's OPERATIONS container, which implies that the operation appears under the iTool's **Edit** menu. A proxy (or alias) to this object is created in the EDIT subcontainer of the iTool's TOOLBAR container, which places the operation on the toolbar. Only one instance of the Undo object is created, but its action can be invoked from both the menu and the toolbar.

Proxy identifiers are assigned by the Register method for the object being proxied. See “[Registering Components](#)” on page 38 for additional details.

Object Descriptors

Object descriptors are iTool objects that contain enough information about a given object class to create an object of that class when necessary. In many cases, object descriptors, rather than instances of the objects they create, are stored in the iTool hierarchy; this approach allows object instances to be created only when needed. Object descriptors also manage instances of objects that can be re-used by the system, avoiding the need to create a new instance of an object (such as an operation) each time it is used.

Cases in which an iTool developer will need to know about or use object descriptors rather than object identifiers are very rare. We mention object descriptors here because they are used extensively in the iTool object hierarchy to expose the functionality of objects that are created as needed, rather than being created automatically when the iTool is created.

iTool Object Hierarchy

The iTool system is a collection of object class instances organized in a hierarchy of container objects. The hierarchy serves both to organize the numerous object instances and to display information about the objects in the iTool user interface. In most cases, an object's location in the iTool hierarchy controls where and how the object is made visible in the user interface.

For example, the Rotate operation object is stored in the iImage iTool's object hierarchy with the object identifier

```
OPERATIONS/OPERATIONS/ROTATE
```

From this identifier we can deduce two things:

1. The Rotate operation object is stored in the iTool's object hierarchy in the OPERATIONS container within the OPERATIONS container.
2. The Rotate operation will be displayed in the iTool's widget interface under the **Operations** menu.

iTool System Object

The *iTool system object* contains and provides a single point of access to all objects managed by the iTool system. Only one instance of the iTool system object can exist in a given IDL session; it is created automatically when any iTool is created.

Note

As an iTool developer, there is no need for you to create or otherwise interact with the system object yourself. This discussion of the structure of the system object is included solely to help you understand the organization of iTool objects.

The iTool system object is a subclass of the IDLitContainer object, which provides functionality to manage a hierarchy of container objects via their object identifiers.

iTool System-Level Hierarchy

As the root of the iTools environment, the iTool system object has the unique object identifier of “/”. All fully qualified object identifiers begin with this reference to the system object, providing a global location on which to base a location in the iTools hierarchy.

The hierarchy contained by the iTool system object includes the following containers:

/TOOLS

This container holds references to all active iTools.

/CLIPBOARD

This container holds items that are on the local system clipboard.

/REGISTRY

This container holds object descriptors for the iTool object classes that are *registered* with the system object. Individual iTools, Visualization types, and User Interface types can all be registered with the system object; other iTool object types are registered only with the individual iTool to which they belong. Objects that are registered with the system object are available for use in the IDL MAIN execution context — that is, these objects are available at the IDL command line.

/REGISTRY/TOOLS

This container holds the object descriptors for the individual iTools available in the system. All iTools must be registered with the system object.

/REGISTRY/VISUALIZATIONS

This container holds the object descriptors for the visualization types registered with the system object. Visualization types that are registered with the system object are available to all iTools, and thus allow users to create visualizations via the OVERPLOT keyword to an iTool launch routine even in cases where the appropriate visualization type is not registered with the current iTool. Registered visualization types are displayed in a list in the iTool **Insert Visualization** dialog. See [Chapter 6, “Creating a Visualization”](#) for more on visualization types.

/REGISTRY/WIDGET INTERFACE

This container holds a list of available user interface routines that are available to the system. In the initial release of the iTool system, only one user interface exists. By providing the capability to choose from a list of interfaces, however, different interfaces can easily be “plugged in” to the iTool framework in the future.

/DATA MANAGER

This container holds the data objects that have been imported into or created by the iTool system. Since the data manager container is system-scoped, all data in the system is available to all iTools.

iTool Objects

Individual iTool *tool objects* contain all objects that are directly associated with a particular instance of a particular iTool. Any number of tool objects can exist; their unique identifiers are found in the /TOOLS container of the iTools system object.

As an iTool developer, you will use both the tool's object reference and its object identifier inside your code.

If you are using command-line style procedures and functions to control an existing iTool from non-iTools code, you can retrieve the tool object identifier and object reference using the `ITGETCURRENT` routine.

iTool-Level Hierarchy

Each individual iTool (held in the /TOOLS container of the system object) has a sub-hierarchy of tool-level containers. For example, every iTool has a container named OPERATIONS containing objects that affect data. An operation named MyOperation registered for an iTool named MyTool has two possible object identifiers:

```
/TOOLS/MYTOOL/OPERATIONS/MYOPERATION
```

and

```
OPERATIONS/MYOPERATION
```

The first identifier is fully qualified; the second is relative to the MyTool object.

The object identifier hierarchy of each individual iTool includes the following containers:

```
FILE READERS
FILE WRITERS
MANIPULATORS
OPERATIONS
TOOLBARS
WINDOW
WINDOW/VIEW
WINDOW/VIEW/VISUALIZATION LAYER
WINDOW/VIEW/VISUALIZATION LAYER/DATA SPACE
WINDOW/VIEW/VISUALIZATION LAYER/DATA SPACE/VISUALIZATION
WINDOW/VIEW/ANNOTATION LAYER
WINDOW/VIEW/ANNOTATION LAYER/ANNOTATION
```

FILE READERS

A *file reader* is an iTool component object that contains the information necessary to open a file and read its data into the iTools data manager. The FILE READERS container holds the object descriptors of file readers registered with the individual

iTool. Default properties of file readers can be set interactively via the **System Preferences** dialog. See [Chapter 9, “Creating a File Reader”](#) for more on file readers.

For example, the relative identifier for the ASCII file reader is:

```
FILE_READERS/ASCII TEXT
```

FILE WRITERS

A *file writer* is an iTool component object that contains the information necessary to create a file from data stored in the iTools data manager. The FILE WRITERS container holds the object descriptors of file writers registered with the individual iTool. Default properties of file writers can be set interactively via the **System Preferences** dialog. See [Chapter 10, “Creating a File Writer”](#) for more on file writers.

For example, the relative identifier for the Windows Bitmap file writer is:

```
FILE_WRITERS/WINDOWS_BITMAP
```

MANIPULATORS

A *manipulator* is an iTool component object that performs some action on a visualization selected in an iTool. The MANIPULATORS container holds the object descriptors of manipulators registered with the individual iTool. See [Chapter 8, “Creating a Manipulator”](#) for more on manipulators.

For example, the relative identifier for the Rotate manipulator is:

```
MANIPULATORS/ROTATE
```

OPERATIONS

An *operation* is a set of IDL procedure, function, and method calls that acts on either a data item or on the iTool itself. The OPERATIONS container holds the object descriptors of operations registered with the individual iTool. Registered operations appear in the **Operations** menu of the iTool. See [Chapter 7, “Creating an Operation”](#) for more on operations.

The object identifier hierarchy rooted at OPERATIONS is displayed in the iTools Operations Browser in a tree view. The hierarchy may contain multiple levels; the levels are used to organize the individual operations in the iTools Operations menu and in the Operations Browser. For example, the relative identifier of the File Open operation is:

```
OPERATIONS/FILE/OPEN
```

Note that operations that appear in the iTool Operations menu repeat the identifier OPERATIONS. The first instance specifies that the object is stored in the Operations

container, the second specifies that it appears in the Operations menu. For example, the relative identifier for the Statistics operation is:

```
OPERATIONS/OPERATIONS/STATISTICS
```

TOOLBAR

A *toolbar* is an iTool component object that contains information about buttons that should be displayed in the iTool's main interface. The TOOLBAR container holds the object descriptors of operations, manipulators, and annotations that are exposed via the iTool's toolbar. In most cases, these objects are proxies of objects held in other containers. For example, the File Open operation is held by the FILE subcontainer of the OPERATIONS container; it is also exposed (via a proxy) on the iTool toolbar as:

```
TOOLBAR/FILE/OPEN
```

WINDOW

A *window* is an iTool component that holds (indirectly) the actual graphics object hierarchy displayed in the iTool window. It is a representation of an on-screen area on a display device that serves as a graphics destination. Each *window* contains one or more *views*. The relative identifier of a window is always:

```
WINDOW
```

The object hierarchy rooted at the WINDOW is displayed in the iTools Visualization Browser in a tree view. The objects in the hierarchy correspond to the levels shown in the Visualization Browser view.

VIEW

A *view* is an iTool component that represents a rectangular area in which graphics objects are drawn. Each *view* contains one or more *visualization layers* and one or more *annotation layers*. For example the relative identifier of the first view in a window container is:

```
WINDOW/VIEW_1
```

VISUALIZATION LAYER

A *visualization layer* is an iTool component that contains visualizations. Each *visualization layer* contains zero or more *data spaces*. For example, the relative identifier of the visualization layer in the first view in window container is:

```
WINDOW/VIEW_1/VISUALIZATION LAYER
```

DATA SPACE

A data space is an iTool component that manages the data range, transformation matrix, and other data-centric properties of visualizations in a visualization layer. Each *data space* contains one or more *visualizations*. For example, the relative identifier of the second data space in the visualization layer in the first view in window container is:

```
WINDOW/VIEW_1/VISUALIZATION_LAYER/DATA_SPACE_1
```

Note

Data space numbering is zero-based — that is, the first data space created is number zero. The object identifier for the first data space, however, *does not* include the number. Identifiers for additional data spaces *do* include the number.

A *visualization* is a group of component objects that are displayed to the iTool user in the main iTool window. Examples of visualizations are plots, surfaces, contours, *etc.* For example, the relative identifier of the first plot visualization in the first data space in the visualization layer in the first view in window container is:

```
WINDOW/VIEW_1/VISUALIZATION_LAYER/DATA_SPACE/PLOT
```

Note

Visualization numbering is zero-based — that is, the first visualization of a specific type created within a data space is number zero. The object identifier for the first visualization, however, *does not* include the number. Identifiers for additional visualizations of the same type within the same data space *do* include the number.

Visualizations may be containers themselves, containing other visualizations. The Axis visualization is an example; it contains all of the individual axes inserted into a given data space.

ANNOTATION LAYER

An *annotation layer* is an iTool component that contains annotations. Each *visualization layer* contains zero or more *annotations*. For example, the relative identifier of the annotation layer in the first view in window container is:

```
WINDOW/VIEW_1/ANNOTATION_LAYER
```

An *annotation* is a graphical component that can be added to the main iTool window by the iTool user in an interactive operation. Examples of annotations are text, lines, polygons, *etc.* For example, the relative identifier of the first text annotation in the first annotation layer in the first view in window container is:

```
WINDOW/VIEW_1/ANNOTATION_LAYER/TEXT
```

Note

Annotation numbering is zero-based — that is, the first annotation of a specific type created within a data space is number zero. The object identifier for the first annotation, however, *does not* include the number. Identifiers for additional annotations of the same type within the same data space *do* include the number.

Registering Components

Registering an object class links the file containing the IDL code that defines the object (an iTool, a visualization type, an operation, *etc.*) with the object identifier. Objects can be registered either with the iTool system object (in which case their identifiers are fully qualified) or with an individual iTool class (in which case their identifiers are relative to the iTool or to a specific container within the tool).

When an object is registered, it is not immediately instantiated. Instead, the information required to create the object is saved in an object descriptor and placed in the appropriate location in the iTool hierarchy. Later, when the functionality contained in the object is needed, the object descriptor either instantiates the object or provides a reference to an existing instance of the object.

Registration Methods

Objects are registered using the ITREGISTER procedure (to register the object with the iTool system object) or by calling a Register method on an individual iTool component object.

Registering Objects with the System Object

Individual iTool components can be registered with the iTool system object. Of these:

- individual iTools *must* be registered with the system object before they can be created and displayed.
- visualization types, annotation types, and file readers and writers *may* be registered with the system object, but can also be registered with an iTool. Components that are registered with the system object will be available to all iTools.
- user interface types *must* be registered with the system object; however, creation of new user interfaces is a rare and complex occurrence.

To register an object with the iTool system object, use the ITREGISTER procedure. See “[ITREGISTER](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details and “[Registering a New Tool Class](#)” on page 101 for an example using ITREGISTER.

Registering Objects with an iTool

Visualization types, operations, manipulators, file readers, and file writers can be registered with an individual iTool. Of these, all must be registered with an individual

iTool except for visualization types, which may have been registered with the iTool system object.

Note

Many operations, manipulators, file readers, and file writers are registered by the IDLitToolbase class. If you create a new iTool based on this class, these features will be registered automatically. See [“Subclassing from the IDLitToolbase Class”](#) on page 91 for details.

Tip

If you want some, but not all, of the functionality exposed by the IDLitToolbase class, you may find it useful to subclass from IDLitToolbase and *unregister* one or more features. See the sections on unregistering items in the chapters devoted to creating operations, manipulators, file readers, and file writers.

To register an object with an individual iTool, use one of the Register methods of the IDLitTool class. Register methods exist for each type of object that can be registered (IDLitTool::RegisterOperation for operations, for example). A call to a registration method looks something like this

```
self->RegisterObject, ObjectName, Object_Class_Name
```

where *Object* is one of the object types that can be registered (Visualization, Operation, Manipulator, FileReader, or FileWriter), *ObjectName* is the string you will use when referring to the object, and *Object_Class_Name* is a string that specifies the name of the class file that contains the object’s definition.

See the Register methods under [“IDLitTool”](#) in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details, and [“Registering a Visualization Type”](#) on page 136, [“Registering an Operation”](#) on page 182, [“Registering a Manipulator”](#) on page 165, [“Registering a File Reader”](#) on page 245, and [“Registering a File Writer”](#) on page 270 for examples.

Specifying Object Identifiers

You can use the IDENTIFIER keyword to any of the Register methods to specify an object identifier for the registered object, and thus specify the object’s location in the iTool object hierarchy and in the user interface. If you do not specify a value for the IDENTIFIER keyword, a suitable object identifier will be constructed based on the type of object being registered and the specified *ObjectName*.

Proxy Registration

You can also register an object as a *proxy* (or *alias*) to another object that has already been registered. Registering an object as a proxy places the proxy object in the iTool

hierarchy in the specified place, but actually calls the original object when a user requests the proxied object. To register a proxy object, specify an object identifier string as the value of the PROXY keyword to the Register method. For example, the following call to the RegisterOperation method places a proxy to the Undo object stored in the iTool hierarchy under OPERATIONS/EDIT/UNDO in the hierarchy under TOOLBAR/EDIT/UNDO:

```
self->RegisterOperation, 'Undo', PROXY = 'Operations/Edit/Undo', $  
    IDENTIFIER = 'Toolbar/Edit/Undo'
```


iTool Messaging System

Notifications are messages sent from one iTool component to one or more *observer* components. The iTool messaging system provides a unified way for components to notify each other of important changes; it is quite general, and can be used to send messages related to any type of change. Some examples:

- Visualizations send notifications when components of the visualization are selected or unselected.
- Notifications are issued when the user changes the value of a property. All visualizations or operations that depend on the value of that property are automatically notified.

Note

Messaging functionality is provided mainly by the [IDLitTool](#) and [IDLitUI](#) objects, using the interface defined by the [IDLitIMessaging](#) object.

In many cases, the iTool messaging system is transparent to you as an iTool developer; you may never need to create code that uses the messaging system. The main exception to this rule is the creation of user interface panels (discussed in [Chapter 14, “Creating a User Interface Panel”](#)), but there may be other instances in which the notifications sent by the iTool framework itself do not meet your needs and must be augmented by your own message generation and handling code.

Sending Notifications

To send a notification, an iTool component calls the [IDLitIMessaging::DoOnNotify](#) method, providing the object identifier of the component that is sending the notification, a string that uniquely identifies the message being sent, and any value associated with the message. The method call looks like:

```
Obj->DoOnNotify, IdOriginator, IdMessage, Value
```

where *Obj* is the object calling the DoOnNotify method, *IdOriginator* is the iTool component object identifier string of the component that changed, *IdMessage* is a string that uniquely identifies the change, and *Value* is the value associated with *IdMessage*.

The DoOnNotify method is available to most iTool components, since all components subclass from the IDLitIMessaging class either directly or indirectly.

See “[IDLitIMessaging::DoOnNotify](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

The *IdOriginator* argument is generally the object identifier of an iTool component object, but it can be any string value.

Notification Messages

The value of the *IdMessage* argument to the *DoOnNotify* method is a string value that must uniquely identify the message being sent. iTool components and callback routines that process notification messages use the value of the *IdMessage* string to determine what action to take when a message arrives from an observed component.

When you call the *DoOnNotify* method yourself, use caution in choosing the value of the *IdMessage* string. If the string you choose conflicts with a message being sent by another iTool component, the message-handling routines may be activated at the wrong time.

Standard iTool Messages

The following is a list of notification messages sent by components that are part of the standard iTool distribution:

| Message String | Meaning |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| SELECTED UNSELECTED | The selection state of an item being watched has changed. <i>Value</i> contains the object identifier of the component whose selection changed. |
| SELECTIONCHANGED | The selected item within the current iTool changed. <i>Value</i> contains an empty string. |
| ADDITEMS MOVEITEMS REMOVEITEMS | A call to the Add, Move, or Remove method of an <i>IDLitContainer</i> that supports the <i>IDLitIMessaging</i> interface was made. <i>Value</i> contains the object identifier of the item that was added, moved, or removed. |
| SETPROPERTY | The value of a property has been changed on a component. If a single property was changed, <i>Value</i> contains the identifier of the property that changed. If multiple properties were changed, <i>Value</i> contains a null string. |

Table 2-1: Standard iTool Messages

| Message String | Meaning |
|--------------------------|---|
| SENSITIVE UNSENSITIVE | The SENSITIVE property of a component has changed. <i>Value</i> contains an empty string. |
| VIEW_PAN | The currently selected view has been panned. <i>Value</i> is a two-element integer vector [x, y] specifying the location of the lower left corner of the <i>visible portion</i> of the view relative to the lower left corner of the entire view. |
| VIEW_ZOOM | The currently selected view has been zoomed. <i>Value</i> is a floating-point integer representing the new zoom factor for the view. |

Table 2-1: Standard iTool Messages (Continued)

Observers

To watch for notifications from an iTool component, an iTool component calls the [IDLitMessaging::AddOnNotifyObserver](#) method, providing the object identifier of the component that is watching and the object identifier of the object being watched as arguments. The method call looks like:

```
Obj->AddOnNotifyObserver, IdObserver, IdSubject
```

where *Obj* is the object calling the AddOnNotifyObserver method, *IdObserver* is the iTool component object identifier string of the component that is watching for notification messages, and *IdSubject* is a string value identifying the item that *IdObserver* is interested in. This is normally the object identifier of an iTool component object, but it can be any string value.

Note

When writing a user interface panel, the *IdObserver* argument contains the object identifier of a user interface adaptor created by a call to the RegisterWidget method of the IDLitUI class. See [“Creating a UI Panel Interface”](#) on page 313 for details.

System Resources

This section contains information on resources used by the iTool system.

Icon Bitmaps

Some iTool components have associated icons. Icons for iTool components are displayed in the tree view of a browser window.

Bitmaps used as icons in the iTool system must be either `.bmp` or `.png` files. The images contained in icon bitmap files can be either True Color (24-bit color) images or paletted (8-bit color) images.

Note

There are different requirements for bitmap images that will be displayed on button widgets. See [“Using Button Widgets”](#) in Chapter 30 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for details.

By default, bitmap files for icons used by the iTool system are stored in the `bitmaps` subdirectory of the `resource` subdirectory of the IDL distribution. If an icon's bitmap file is located in this directory, specify the base name of the file — *without the filename extension* — as the value of the `ICON` property of the component. For example, to use the file `arrow.bmp`, located in the `resource/bitmaps` subdirectory of the IDL distribution, specify the value of the `ICON` property as follows:

```
ICON = 'arrow'
```

If you include the filename extension when setting the `ICON` property, the iTool system assumes that the specified value is the full path to the bitmap file. For example, to use the file `my_icon.png`, stored in the directory `/home/mydir` as an icon, specify the value of the `ICON` property as follows:

```
ICON = '/home/mydir/my_icon.png'
```

If you are distributing your iTool code to others, you may want to specify a path relative to the location of your code for the icon bitmap files. To retrieve the path to the file containing code for a given routine, you could use code similar to the following:

```
; Use my own Icon bitmap
iconName = 'my_icon.png'
routineName = 'myVisualizationType__define'
routineInfo = ROUTINE_INFO(routineName, /SOURCE)
path = FILE_DIRNAME(routineInfo.path, /MARK_DIRECTORY)
```

```
iconPath = path + iconName
```

This code uses the `ROUTINE_INFO` function to retrieve the path to the file specified by the string `routineName`. It then extracts the directory that contains the file using the `FILE_DIRNAME` function, and concatenates the directory name with the name of the bitmap file contained in the string `iconName`.

Note

The routine specified by `routineName` must have been compiled for the `ROUTINE_INFO` function to return the correct value.

Including this code in a routine and setting the `ICON` property equal to the variable `iconPath` provides a platform-independent method for locating bitmap files in a directory relative to the directory from which your iTool code was compiled.

If the value of the `ICON` property is not set and the iTool system needs to display a bitmap to represent a component, the file `resource/bitmaps/new.bmp` is used.

Help System

The iTool system allows the user to select “Help on Selected Item” from the **Help** menu (or, in the case of the Operations browser, from the context menu) to display online help for the selected item.

Note

Help for iTool items is provided via a call to the `ONLINE_HELP` procedure. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss the creation of help files suitable for display by `ONLINE_HELP`; please see [Chapter 23, “Providing Online Help For Your Application”](#) in the *Building IDL Applications* manual for additional information.

Creating a Help Directory

Help content designed for use by the iTools help system should be located in a separate directory that is included in IDL’s help path (as defined by the `!HELP_PATH` system variable).

Information about the topic to be displayed by `ONLINE_HELP` is contained in an XML format file with a name of the form `*help.xml`. To create the `*help.xml` file, copy the file `<IDL_DIR>/help/template_help.xml` into your help directory, rename it to suit your application, and edit it as described in [“Format of Help Entries”](#) on page 46.

Note

You must also copy the file `<IDL_DIR>/help/itools.xsd` into your help directory.

See “[Example: Help Topic for MyVisType](#)” on page 48 for an example outlining the process of creating a help topic for a user-created iTool component.

Format of Help Entries

The format for a help entry in the `*help.xml` file is:

```
<Topic>
  <Keyword>helpKeyword</Keyword>
  <Link type="IDLHELP" book="adpFile">fileName</Link>
  <Link type="MSHTMLHELP" book="chmFile">contextNumber</Link>
  <Link type="PDF" book="pdfFile"></Link>
  <Link type="HTML" book="htmlFile">htmlAnchor</Link>
  <Link type="TEXT">path_to_textFile</Link>
</Topic>
```

Where:

The *value* of the `<Keyword>` element is the iTool object class name of the selected object. There can be multiple `<Keyword>` elements for a given `<Topic>`, but they must all precede any `<Link>` element. There must be at least one `<Link>` element for a given `<Topic>`.

Note

All strings are case sensitive. “Book” is not the same as “book”.

The `type` attribute of the `<Link>` element defines the type of help viewer to be invoked. The allowed values for the `type` attribute are:

| Link type | Meaning |
|------------|---|
| IDLHELP | Use the default IDL online help viewer application. |
| MSHTMLHELP | Use the Microsoft Windows HTML Help viewer application. |
| PDF | Use the system default PDF file viewer application. |
| HTML | Use the system default web browser. |
| TEXT | Use the IDL XDISPLAYFILE procedure. |

Table 2-2: Help Topic Link Types

The `book` attribute of the `<Link>` element defines the location of your iTool's help system. The type of file specified as the value for the `book` attribute depends on the value of the `type` attribute:

| Link type | Value of book attribute |
|------------|--|
| IDLHELP | The <code>book</code> attribute should contain the name of your help system's <code>.adp</code> file. |
| MSHTMLHELP | The <code>book</code> attribute should contain the name of your help system's <code>.chm</code> file. |
| PDF | The <code>book</code> attribute should contain the name of the PDF file to be displayed. |
| HTML | The <code>book</code> attribute should contain the name of an HTML file to be displayed. |
| TEXT | The <code>book</code> attribute can contain the full path to the text file to be displayed. This value will be ignored, however, if the <code><Link></code> element has a <i>value</i> . |

Table 2-3: Help Topic book Attribute Values

Note

You must either specify the full path to the file as the value of the `book` attribute, or the file must be located in a directory that is included in IDL's help path.

The *value* of the <Link> element specifies the specific content to be displayed from the help system specified by the `book` attribute. The value depends on the value of the `type` attribute:

| Link type | Value of the Link Element |
|------------|---|
| IDLHELP | The base name of an HTML file (do not include the file extension) to be displayed in the main window of the IDL Assistant help viewer. The file must be located in the same directory as the help system's <code>.adp</code> file. If no value is provided, IDL displays home page specified in the help system's <code>.adp</code> file. |
| MSHTMLHELP | The <i>context number</i> . A context number is an integer used by the Microsoft Windows HTMLHelp viewer to select a topic from the help system's <code>.chm</code> file. If no value is provided, IDL displays the help system's home page. |
| PDF | Ignored. IDL will always display the first page of the file specified by the <code>book</code> attribute. |
| HTML | An HTML <i>anchor</i> tag within the specified HTML file. If no value is provided, IDL displays the top of the HTML page specified by the <code>book</code> attribute. |
| TEXT | The full path to the text file to be displayed. If the <i>value</i> is present, it takes precedence over the value of the <code>book</code> attribute (if any). |

Table 2-4: Help Topic Link Values

If more than one <Link> element is present, IDL will first attempt to use the element with the `type` attribute set to `IDLHELP`. If no <Link> element with the `type` attribute set to `IDLHELP` is present, IDL will choose which to display based on the platform; on Windows platforms, the <Link> element with the `type` attribute set to `MSHTMLHELP` will be used, on Unix platforms, the <Link> entity with the `type` attribute set to `PDF` will be used. If the appropriate platform-specific <Link> is not present, the first <Link> entity of a type that can be displayed on the current platform will be used.

Example: Help Topic for MyVisType

Suppose you have created a new iTool visualization type named `MyVisType` and registered it with the iTool, and you have created a single-topic HTML file named

`MyVisType.html` to describe it. In order to display your HTML file when the user selects a `MyVisType` visualization and selects **Help** → **Help on Selected Item**, you would do something like the following:

1. Install the `MyVisType.html` file somewhere. Installing the file in the same directory as the `MyVisType__define.pro` and other associated iTool files would be a reasonable choice, and for the purposes of this example we assume this is the location of the file. In addition, suppose that you create this directory as `myvistype` at the same level as the `rsi` directory that contains the IDL hierarchy.
2. Copy the `<IDL_DIR>/help/template_help.xml` file to the same directory as the `MyVisType.html` file and rename it. The exact name does not matter, as long as the filename matches the pattern `*help.xml`. We'll assume the file is named `MyVisType_help.xml`.
3. Copy the `<IDL_DIR>/help/itools.xsd` file to the same directory as the `MyVisType.html` file.
4. Edit the `MyVisType_help.xml` file to contain topic information for your help file. The `<Topic>` element would look like:

```
<Topic>
  <Keyword>MyVisType</Keyword>
  <Link type="HTML" book="MyVisType.html"></Link>
</Topic>
```

5. Ensure that the directory that includes the `MyVisType` files is included in IDL's help path. (You may already be adding this directory to IDL's search path.) Since you have created your `myvistype` directory at the same level as the `rsi` directory, you could use IDL code that looks like this:

```
idldir=EXPAND_PATH('<IDL_DIR>')
myVisDir=idldir + PATH_SEP() + '..' + PATH_SEP() + '..' + $
  PATH_SEP() + 'myvistype'
!HELP_PATH = !HELP_PATH + PATH_SEP(/SEARCH) + myVisDir
```

You might include this code block in the `myvistype__define.pro` file, to ensure that the help path is set correctly when your visualization type is in use.

With this preparation, a user who displayed a visualization of type `MyVisType` could select the visualization and then select **Help** → **Help on Selected Item** to display your `MyVisType.html` file in the default web browser.

Providing help content using the IDL Assistant help viewer, a PDF file, or any other supported help content format would follow the same procedure, with adjustments for the help file type in the `MyVisType_help.xml` file.



Chapter 3

Data Management

This chapter describes the iTool data management system.

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| iTool Data Manager | 53 | Parameters | 61 |
| iTool Data Types | 54 | Data Type Matching | 63 |
| iTool Data Objects | 56 | Data Update Mechanism | 65 |

Overview of iTool Data Management

The iTools system is designed to turn raw data — numbers stored in computer memory — into visualizations that convey information to the viewer. Using data to create a visual display requires some way to route each piece of data to the appropriate part of the algorithm that displays it. In the terminology used by the iTool system, each data item must be associated with a *parameter* of a *visualization*.

The iTools system manages the relationship between data and the visualizations that display data via two mechanisms: *iTool data types* and *parameter data types*. The iTool data type is a property of an IDLitData object (or of an object that inherits from the IDLitData object); it can be any valid scalar string. iTool data types are described in detail in “[iTool Data Types](#)” on page 54. Parameter data types are assigned when a visualization object registers its parameters with the iTool system; they also can be any valid scalar string. Parameter data types are described in “[Parameters](#)” on page 61.

Note

iTool operations, which do not support the concept of parameters or parameter names, determine whether they can act on a given data object solely on the basis of the iTool data type.

The iTool data type and parameter data types are used to match up data objects with visualizations that need data to display. See “[Data Type Matching](#)” on page 63 for a description of how matches are made.

[This chapter](#) describes data-management tasks undertaken by the iTool developer. Interactive users manipulate data using a graphical interface known as the iTool Data Manager; this interface allows the user to select and import data items into the iTool system and to manually associate data items with parameters. See [Chapter 2](#), “[Importing and Exporting Data](#)” in the *iTool User’s Guide* manual for a complete description of the Data Manager and its use.

iTool Data Manager

Data imported into the iTool system is stored in a separate data object hierarchy that is available to all iTools. When a data item is placed in the data manager hierarchy, whether interactively by a user or automatically by some operation of an iTool, the data item is immediately visible to all iTools. The hierarchy of the data manager reflects the hierarchy of the data containers (IDLitDataContainer and IDLitParameterSet objects) it holds.

Unless you are creating new data items within an iTool operation, it is unlikely that you will need to add data to (or remove data from) the data manager yourself. Addition of data items to the data manager is handled automatically if data is imported via any of the standard iTool data import mechanisms (choosing **Open** from the **File** menu, or clicking an **Import** button in the Data Manager user interface).

Adding Data to the Data Manager

To add an IDLitData, IDLitDataContainer, or IDLitParameterSet object to the data manager, call the `IDLitContainer::AddByIdentifier` method on your iTool object with the identifier string `'/Data Manager'` (note that identifier strings can include spaces, as between the words “Data” and “Manager”):

```
; Create an IDLitDataObject
oData = OBJ_NEW('IDLitData', myData, IDENTIFIER = 'Cool Data')

; Get a reference to the current iTool object.
; (The GetTool method is inherited from the IDLitIMessaging
; class.)
oTool = self->GetTool()

; Add the data object to the data manager
oTool->AddByIdentifier, '/Data Manager', oData
```

This results in the `oData` data object being stored in the data manager with the identifier `'/Data Manager/Cool Data'`.

See “[iTool Object Identifiers](#)” on page 28 for additional information on identifier strings.

Removing Data from the Data Manager

To remove data from the data manager, call the `IDLitContainer::RemoveByIdentifier` method on your iTool object with the full identifier string used to add the data object:

```
oData = oTool->RemoveByIdentifier('/Data Manager/Cool Data')
```

iTool Data Types

Every iTool data item (IDLitData object or IDLitDataContainer object) has an associated *iTool data type*. The iTool data type of a data item is specified via the TYPE property of the data object, which can contain any scalar string.

Note

Do not confuse iTool data types with IDL's inherent data types — integers and floating-point integers of various sizes and precisions, strings, structures, pointers, and object references. iTool data types are used only by the iTool system when matching data objects with the parameters expected by a visualization or operation. IDL data types describe how a value or values are stored in computer memory. iTool data types need not correspond directly to an IDL data type.

iTool data typing allows the iTool system to match up data objects with visualization parameters even if the data objects have not been explicitly associated with the visualization parameters. Similarly, an iTool operation may apply only to specific forms of data; the iTool data typing mechanism allows an operation to “see” only data of the appropriate type.

Composite Data Types

Because IDLitData objects can be collected in IDLitDataContainer objects (and, by extension, IDLitParameterSet objects), it is possible that data objects with different iTool data types will be collected in a single container. The iTool data typing system allows these heterogeneous data sets to be named with unique iTool data types that reflect the contents of the container. For example, you might define a data container that contains IDLitData objects with the iTool data types of IDLVECTOR and IDLARRAY2D with your own iTool data type, such as MY_PLOT.

Data Types of iTool Components

Since the iTool data type of a data item can be any scalar string value, it is up to the iTool developer to ensure that a data object assigned a given iTool data type contains the data expected by visualizations and operations that accept that type.

Visualizations or operations that accept an iTool data type are written to act on data items that have specific IDL data types (or collections of specific IDL data types, in the case of compound data types). If the data object contains data in a format not expected by the visualization or operation, errors or unexpected behaviors may result.

Table 3-1 lists the iTool data types defined by the standard iTools included with IDL. You should avoid using these iTool data type names when defining data objects that do not match the contents listed here; if data objects with different contents are given these iTool data type names, portions of the standard iTool functionality may no longer function correctly.

| iTool Data Type | Contents |
|-------------------|---|
| IDLARRAY2D | A two-dimensional array of any IDL data type |
| IDLARRAY3D | A three-dimensional array of any IDL data type |
| IDLCONNECTIVITY | A vector containing connectivity list data |
| IDLIMAGE | A composite data type that includes IDLIMAGEPIXELS and IDLPALETTE data |
| IDLIMAGEPIXELS | One or more two-dimensional image planes |
| IDL_OPACITY_TABLE | A 256-element byte array |
| IDLPALETTE | A 3 x 256-element byte array |
| IDLPOLYVERTEX | A composite data type that contains a vector of vertex data and a vector of connectivity data |
| IDLVECTOR | A vector of any IDL data type |
| IDLVERTEX | A vector containing vertex data |

Table 3-1: iTool data types used by the standard iTools shipped with IDL.

In addition to avoiding use of the standard iTool data type names for new data types, you should consider using unique naming schemes for iTool data types you create. Choosing your own iTool data type naming scheme will help to avoid conflicts with iTools built by others. This is especially important if you intend to share your iTool code with other IDL users. Choosing a unique prefix or suffix for your iTool data type names should guard against most namespace collisions.

iTool Data Objects

Each item of data used by an iTool must be encapsulated in an IDLitData object. Data objects can be grouped into collections using the IDLitDataContainer class or its subclass, IDLitParameterSet.

Data Objects

IDLitData objects can hold data items of any IDL data type. The IDLitData class provides iTool data typing and data change notification functionality, and when coupled with the IDLitDataContainer object forms the base element for the construction of composite data types.

IDLitData objects implement the iTools *notifier interface*, which provides a mechanism by which observers of a data item can be alerted when the state of the information contained in the data object changes. See [“Data Update Mechanism”](#) on page 65 for details on the notification system.

Data objects are created using standard IDL object-creation syntax. For example, to create a data object that contains a vector of data:

```
; Create a data vector containing 10 random values
myData = RANDOMU(seed, 10)
; Create a new data object from the vector.
oData = OBJ_NEW('IDLitDataIDLVector', myData)
```

The IDLitDataIDLVector class is a subclass of IDLitData designed to hold vector data. See [“IDLitData”](#) in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for a complete description of the data object, its methods, and its properties.

Data Containers

IDLitDataContainer objects can hold any number of IDLitData or IDLitDataContainer objects. This ability to organize data into object hierarchies allows for the creation of composite data types.

Data container objects are created using standard IDL object-creation syntax, and individual data objects are included in the data container via a call to the IDLitContainer::Add method. For example, the following statements create a new data container and add the data object created in the previous section:

```
; Create a data container
oDataContainer = OBJ_NEW('IDLitDataContainer')
; Add a data object.
oDataContainer->Add, oData
```


In this example we do not specify an iTool data type for the data container object itself.

Tip

Often, you will organize data using a subclass of the IDLitDataContainer class: the IDLitParameterSet.

See “IDLitDataContainer” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for a complete description of the data container object, its methods, and its properties.

Parameter Sets

The IDLitParameterSet class is a specialized subclass of the IDLitDataContainer class that provides the ability to associate parameters with the contained IDLitData and IDLitDataContainer objects. This association allows the iTool developer to package a set of data parameters in a single container, which is then provided to the iTools system for processing and display. See “IDLitParameterSet” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for a complete description of the parameter set object, its methods, and its properties.

Note

Do not confuse *parameter sets*, which are containers for data objects, with *parameters*, which define how data is used by a visualization object. Parameters are described in “Parameters” on page 61.

Using a parameter set object is very similar to using a data container object. The parameter set itself is created using standard IDL object-creation syntax. The parameter set object allows for the association of a parameter with each added data object. For example, the following statements create a new parameter set and add the data object created in the previous section, assigning a parameter:

```
; Create a parameter set object
oParameterSet = OBJ_NEW('IDLitParameterSet')
; Add a data object, assigning a parameter
oParameterSet->Add, oData, PARAMETER_NAME = 'Y data'
```

Predefined iTool Data Classes

The iTool system distributed with IDL includes a number of predefined data classes. The predefined classes are subclasses of the `IDLitData` class; each performs initialization steps that are commonly used when creating data objects that contain data of specific composite data types. Some of the predefined data classes create data sub-containers to hold associated data objects, and some register properties associated with the data.

Note

The predefined iTool data subclasses are provided as a convenience. You can always create a generic `IDLitData` object rather than using one of the predefined classes.

You can create objects of these data classes in the same way you create a generic data object: by calling the `OBJ_NEW` function and specifying the appropriate class name. You can also create new specialized data classes based on one of the predefined classes. Data classes are located in the `lib/itools/components` subdirectory of the IDL directory.

IDLitDataIDLArray2D

Creates an `IDLitData` object of whose `TYPE` property is set to `IDLARRAY2D`. Used to store a two-dimensional array of any IDL data type.

Registered Properties

- None

Data Sub-containers

- None

IDLitDataIDLArray3D

Creates an `IDLitData` object of whose `TYPE` property is set to `IDLARRAY3D`. Used to store a three-dimensional array of any IDL data type.

Registered Properties

- None

Data Sub-containers

- None

IDLitDataIDLImage

Creates an IDLitData object of whose TYPE property is set to IDLIMAGE. Used to store two-dimensional image data. Images can be constructed from multiple image planes.

Registered Properties

- INTERLEAVE

Data Sub-containers

- An IDLitDataIDLPalette object named “Palette” that contains palette information provided as an argument to the Init method.
- An IDLitDataIDLImagePixels object named “Image Planes” that contains the image data provided as an argument to the Init method.

IDLitDataIDLImagePixels

Creates an IDLitData object of whose TYPE property is set to IDLIMAGEPIXELS. Used to store the raw image data (pixels).

Registered Properties

- INTERLEAVE

Data Sub-containers

- None

IDLitDataIDLPalette

Creates an IDLitData object of whose TYPE property is set to IDLPALETTE. Used to store palette data.

Registered Properties

- None

Data Sub-containers

- None

IDLitDataIDLPolyvertex

Creates an IDLitData object of whose TYPE property is set to IDLPOLYVERTEX. Used to store vertex and connectivity lists suitable for use with the IDLgrPolygon and IDLgrPolyline objects.

Registered Properties

- None

Data Sub-containers

- An IDLitData object named “Vertices” (IDLVERTEX) that contains the vertex list.
- An IDLitData object named “Connectivity” (IDLCONNECTIVITY) that contains the connectivity list.

IDLitDataIDLVector

Creates an IDLitData object of whose TYPE property is set to IDLVECTOR. Used to store a one-dimensional array of any IDL data type.

Registered Properties

- None

Data Sub-containers

- None

Parameters

Parameters represent data items used in a well-defined way by an algorithm that is computing a result. In the scheme of the iTools, parameters are the raw material fed to *visualization objects* — the IDL routines that create visual displays.

For example, a visualization object that creates a simple line plot might require two parameters: vectors of dependent and independent data values. These two vectors would be passed to the routines within the visualization object for processing, and the result would be displayed in the iTool window.

When a visualization object is created, it *registers* one or more parameters with the iTool system. Each parameter has a *parameter name* and can be of one or more *iTool data types*. Parameter names are used to route the individual data items to the correct routines within the visualization object. See [Chapter 6, “Creating a Visualization”](#) for more on creating visualization objects.

Note

Do not confuse *parameters*, which define how data is used by a visualization object, with *parameter sets*, which are containers for data objects. Parameter sets are described in [“Parameter Sets”](#) on page 57.

Parameter Names

Each parameter registered by a visualization is given a parameter name. The parameter name is a scalar string, and its scope is the visualization by which it is registered. Different visualizations can register parameters that have different properties using the same parameter name.

Parameter Data Types

Each parameter registered by a visualization is associated with one or more iTool data types by setting the TYPES property. The value of the TYPES property can be a scalar string or a string array; a single parameter can be associated with multiple data types. See [“iTool Data Types”](#) on page 54 for more on iTool data types.

Registering Parameters

Parameters are *registered* when a visualization is created; that is, in the Init method of an iTool visualization class. To register a parameter, call the RegisterParameter

method of the `IDLitParameter` class (of which `iTool` visualization classes are a subclass):

```
self->RegisterParameter, ParmameterName, $
    TYPES = ['DataType1', ..., 'DataTypeN']
```

where *ParameterName* is a string that defines the name of the parameter and the `TYPES` keyword is set equal to a string or array of strings specifying the `iTool` system data types the parameter can represent. (See “[iTool Data Types](#)” on page 54 for information on `iTools` data types.)

A typical parameter registration call looks like the following:

```
self->RegisterParameter, 'Y', /INPUT, TYPES='IDLVECTOR', /OPTARGET
```

Here, the string argument `Y` is the name of the parameter being registered. The `INPUT` keyword specifies that `Y` is an input parameter (specified by the method’s caller), the `TYPES` keyword specifies that `Y` is a vector, and the `OPTARGET` keyword specifies that operations can be performed on the `Y` vector.

Additional keywords can be set in the call to `RegisterParameter`. See the documentation for “[IDLitParameter::RegisterParameter](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Data Type Matching

To understand how the iTool data type matching system works, consider the following:

- When a visualization is created, it registers one or more parameters, assigning a *parameter name* and one or more *iTool data types* to each.
- When a data object is imported or created by an iTool, it is assigned one or more iTool data types.
- When a parameter set object is created to contain data objects, each data object can optionally be assigned one or more *parameter names*.

Now assume that an iTool user requests that a particular visualization be created from a particular collection of data objects, which are stored in a parameter set object. The iTool system will do the following:

1. Retrieve the parameter name and iTool data types registered for the visualization's first parameter.
2. If the parameter set object contains a data object whose Parameter Name matches the parameter name of the visualization's first registered parameter, use that data object as the data for the visualization parameter.
3. If the parameter set object does *not* contain a data object with a matching Parameter Name, check the parameter set for data objects for which the Parameter Name property is not set. If there are no data objects without Parameter Names, no data is associated with the visualization parameter.
4. Check the iTool data types of the data objects without Parameter Names. If a data object whose iTool data type matches the list of registered data types for the visualization parameter is found, use that data object as the data for the visualization parameter. If no data objects match any data types, no data is associated with the visualization parameter.
5. Repeat until all registered visualization parameters have been either populated with data, skipped, or there are no more data objects to supply data.

Note

Parameter name matching is done in a case-insensitive fashion. If a parameter is registered with the parameter name “MyParameter” and a data object has its Parameter Name property set to “myParameter”, the two will match.

The [Figure 3-1](#) illustrates this process as a flow diagram.

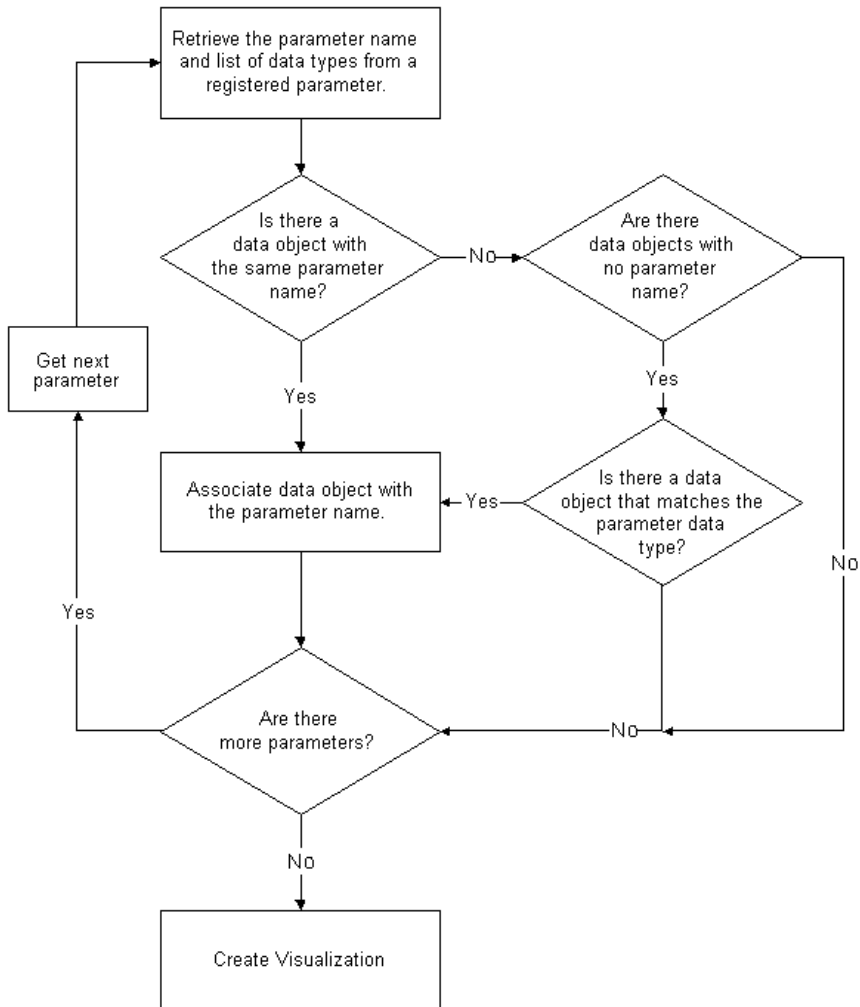


Figure 3-1: Data type matching algorithm used by iTools.

Data Update Mechanism

When the data contained in a data item changes (usually as the result of the application of a data-centric operation), all visualizations that depend on that data item are automatically notified of the change via a call to the visualization object's `OnChangeUpdate` method. (See [“Creating an OnChangeUpdate Method”](#) on page 133 for details.)

The data update mechanism is automatic; if you have assigned iTTool data types (and, optionally, parameter names) to your data objects, the data matching mechanisms of the `IDLitParameter` interface will ensure that updates happen when necessary. Unless you have modified core iTTool functionality, you do not need to handle data change updates yourself.



Chapter 4

Property Management

This chapter describes the iTool property interface.

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| Property Data Types | 71 | Property Aggregation | 81 |
| Registering Properties | 74 | Property Update Mechanism | 84 |
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About the Properties Interface

Object *properties* are used to store settings and values that relate to visualizations, data, and other components of an iTool. The iTools system presents a graphical *property sheet* interface to tool users; see “[Property Sheets](#)” in Chapter 6 of the *iTool User’s Guide* manual for a description of the property sheet interface. As a tool developer, you can manage individual property values, as well as the property set that is visible to users of your application, programmatically.

Note

In most cases, you do not need to manage updates to visualizations or data that result from a user’s modifications to values in a property sheet. See “[Property Update Mechanism](#)” on page 84 for details.

What is a Property?

A property is a value that is associated with an object instance. Examples of property values commonly associated with iTool objects are Boolean True/False flags, text strings, color values stored as RGB triplets, and integer and floating point values. For example, a plot visualization object might have a **Color** property that defines the line color as an RGB triplet, a **Line thickness** property that defines the thickness of the line drawn as an integer value in pixels, and a **Name** property that defines how the plot is referred to in iTool browser windows.

Properties vs. Preferences

In the case of objects that have a visual representation (plots, annotations, surfaces, axes, *etc.*), properties apply to a single instance of an object. When a new instance of the same type of object is created, any property changes applied to the first object are not applied to the second. For example, if you change the color of a plot line to red, subsequent plot lines will still be created with the default line color.

In the case of non-visual objects (operations, file readers and writers, and manipulators) only one instance of the object is created no matter how many times the object is requested. As a result, properties set on these objects will “stick” until changed again. For example, if you change the value of the Width property of the Smooth operation, the property will retain the value you set until you change it again or close that iTool.

Finally, properties that apply to all iTools and which are preserved between iTool sessions are known as *preferences*. Preferences include default values for properties

of visual objects (default line style, colors, *etc.*), and default properties for file readers, and file writers.

How are Properties Displayed?

Any iTool object can have properties. Properties are always displayed via the iTool property sheet interface, which uses the IDL `WIDGET_PROPERTYSHEET` function to present property names and values in a columnar display. The way the property sheet interface is displayed to iTool users depends on the type of object for which properties are being displayed.

- For visualization objects (any graphical item that appears in the iTool window), the property sheet can be displayed by double-clicking on an item in the iTool window, by selecting Properties from the window context menu, or by selecting **Visualization Browser** from the **Window** menu.
- For operations, the property sheet can be displayed by selecting **Operations Browser** from the **Operations** menu.
- For system preferences, the property sheet can be displayed by selecting **Preferences** from the **File** menu.

Setting and Retrieving Property Values

iTool property values are set and retrieved like all object property values, via `SetProperty` and `GetProperty` methods. See “[IDLitComponent::SetProperty](#)” and “[IDLitComponent::GetProperty](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details, but remember that your own object classes will be responsible for implementing these methods and handling the actual property values. See the chapters in “[Using the iTools Component Framework](#)” for examples of `GetProperty` and `SetProperty` methods.

Property Data Types

While object properties can contain any value that can be stored in IDL, the iTool property sheet interface (based on the `WIDGET_PROPERTYSHEET` routine) will only display properties of nine predefined property data types. (See “[Property Data Types](#)” on page 71 for descriptions of the predefined types.) In addition, the property sheet interface allows developers to build and associate a separate widget-based user interface that allows iTool users to specify data values of any IDL data type. User-defined property values are discussed in “[User Defined Property Types](#)” on page 73.

Property Registration

In order for an object property to be displayed by the graphical property sheet interface, it must be registered with the iTool system. Properties are generally registered when an object is created; see [“Registering Properties”](#) on page 74 for additional details.

Property Identifiers

Properties are referenced within the iTools system using property identifiers, which are simple scalar strings defined when the property is registered. See [“Property Identifiers”](#) on page 77 for details.

Property Attributes

In addition to the property value, properties have attributes that affect the way the property is displayed in the property sheet user interface. See [“Property Attributes”](#) on page 78 for details.

Property Aggregation

Visualization objects can be built from any number of atomic IDL graphic objects and iTool visualization objects. The property aggregation mechanism allows the properties of all of the objects in a visualization to be displayed in a single property sheet. See [“Property Aggregation”](#) on page 81 for details.

Property Data Types

Registered properties must be of one of the data types listed in the following table.

Note

Properties of objects that are *not* registered (that is, properties that cannot appear in a property sheet) can be of any IDL data type.

| Type Code | Type | Description |
|-----------|---------|---|
| 0 | USERDEF | User Defined properties can contain values of any IDL type, but must also include a string value that will be displayed in the property sheet. See the following discussion for additional information. |
| 1 | BOOLEAN | Boolean properties contain either the integer 0 or the integer 1. |
| 2 | INTEGER | Integer properties contain an integer value. If a property of integer data type has a VALID_RANGE attribute that includes an increment value, the property is displayed in a property sheet using a slider. If no increment value is supplied, the property sheet allows the user to edit values manually. |
| 3 | FLOAT | Float properties contain a double-precision floating-point value. If a property of float data type has a VALID_RANGE attribute that includes an increment value, the property is displayed in a property sheet using a slider. If no increment value is supplied, the property sheet allows the user to edit values manually. |
| 4 | STRING | String properties contain a scalar string value |
| 5 | COLOR | Color properties contain an RGB color triplet |

Table 4-1: iTools Property Data Types

| Type Code | Type | Description |
|-----------|-----------|---|
| 6 | LINESTYLE | <p>Linestyle properties contain an integer value between 0 and 6, corresponding to the following IDL line styles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 = Solid • 1 = Dotted • 2 = Dashed • 3 = Dash Dot • 4 = Dash Dot Dot • 5 = Long Dashes • 6 = No Line <p>See Appendix B, “Property Controls” in the <i>iTool User’s Guide</i> manual for a visual example of the available line styles.</p> |
| 7 | SYMBOL | <p>Symbol properties contain an integer value between 0 and 8, corresponding to the following IDL symbol types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 = No symbol • 1 = Plus sign • 2 = Asterisk • 3 = Period (Dot) • 4 = Diamond • 5 = Triangle • 6 = Square • 7 = X • 8 = “Greater-than” Arrow Head (>) • 9 = “Less-than” Arrow Head (<) <p>See Appendix B, “Property Controls” in the <i>iTool User’s Guide</i> manual for a visual example of the available symbols.</p> |

Table 4-1: *iTools Property Data Types (Continued)*

| Type Code | Type | Description |
|-----------|-----------|---|
| 8 | THICKNESS | Thickness properties contain an integer value between 1 and 10, corresponding to the thickness (in points) of the line. |
| 9 | ENUMLIST | Enumerated List properties contain an array of string values defined when the property is registered. The GetProperty method returns the zero-based index of the selected item. |

Table 4-1: *iTools Property Data Types (Continued)*

User Defined Property Types

The User Defined property type lets you create a custom interface that allow users of your iTool to select data of types other than the predefined iTool property types. Creating a user defined property type entails the following:

- Creating an `EditUserDefProperty` method for the iTool component (usually a visualization or operation) that uses the user defined property. See [“IDLitComponent::EditUserDefProperty”](#) in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.
- Creating user interface code to allow users to select a value. In the initial release of the iTool system, this means writing an IDL widget interface, but in future releases other users interfaces may be available.
- Creating a *user interface service* to display the interface. See [Chapter 13, “Creating a User Interface Service”](#) in the *iTool Developer’s Guide* manual for details.

Registering Properties

In order for a property associated with an iTool component to be included in the property sheet for that component, the property must be *registered* with the iTool. The property registration mechanism accomplishes several things:

- It allows you to expose as many or as few of the properties of an underlying object as you choose.
- It allows you to add user-defined properties to existing objects, and expose those new properties to users of your application.

Note

You can write code to access and change property values programmatically, even if the property being changed is not registered.

Registering a Property

Register a property by calling the `RegisterProperty` method of the `IDLitComponent` class:

```
self->RegisterProperty, PropertyIdentifier [, TypeCode] $  
    [, ATTRIBUTE = value]
```

where *PropertyIdentifier* is a string that uniquely identifies the property, *TypeCode* is an integer between 0 and 9 specifying the property data type, and *ATTRIBUTE* is a property attribute. You can specify multiple property attributes in the call to `RegisterProperty`; see “[Property Attributes](#)” on page 78 for details.

Note

The property identifier string must obey certain rules; see “[Property Identifiers](#)” on page 77 for details.

You can omit the *TypeCode* parameter and specify a type keyword; the following two method calls are identical:

```
self->RegisterProperty, 'MYPROPERTY', 1  
  
self->RegisterProperty, 'MYPROPERTY', /BOOLEAN
```

See “[Property Data Types](#)” on page 71 for a list of property data types, their type codes, and the associated keywords to the `RegisterProperty` method.

A typical property registration call looks like the following:

```
self->RegisterProperty, 'FONT_STYLE', $
    ENUMLIST = ['Normal', 'Bold'], $
    NAME = 'Font style'
```

Here, the string argument `FONT_STYLE` is the property identifier of the property being registered; this string must be the same as the name of the keyword used with the `GetProperty` or `SetProperty` method when changing the value of the property.

The `ENUMLIST` keyword specifies that the property data type is an enumerated list of strings containing two possible property values (`'Normal'`, `'Bold'`); this will appear as a pull-down list of values in the property sheet. The `NAME` keyword specifies the string that will be used as the label for the property in the property sheet; if `NAME` is omitted, the property identifier string will be used in the property sheet.

Note

Values set via keywords to the `RegisterProperty` method are known as *property attributes*. Property attributes can be modified after registration using the `SetPropertyAttribute` method, described in “[Property Attributes](#)” on page 78.

Additional keywords can be set in the call to `RegisterProperty`. See the documentation for “[IDLitComponent::RegisterProperty](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

In addition to registering the property using `RegisterProperty`, you must make sure that the `GetProperty` and `SetProperty` methods of your object handle the value of the property being registered.

Pre-Registered Properties

Not all properties need to be explicitly registered in your *iTool* code in order to be displayed in a property sheet. Most of the IDL graphics objects (`IDLgrAxis`, `IDLgrPlot`, *etc.*) have a set of properties that are automatically registered if you set the `REGISTER_PROPERTIES` property of the object to 1 when it is instantiated. See the list of object properties contained in the documentation for the IDL graphics objects in the *IDL Reference Guide* to determine which properties are registered when the `REGISTER_PROPERTIES` property is set.

There may be times when you want some, but not all, of the registrable properties of a graphics object to appear in the property sheet interface. You have two options in this case:

1. Register the properties of the graphics object individually, with calls to the `RegisterProperty` method.

2. Use the REGISTER_PROPERTIES keyword when instantiating the graphics object, then set the HIDE property attribute on the properties you want to remove from the property sheet. See [“Property Attributes”](#) on page 78 for more on this option.

Property Identifiers

Property *identifiers* are scalar string values that identify a registered property. The property identifier string *must* be accepted as a keyword by the `GetProperty` and `SetProperty` methods for the object. Like all IDL keywords, property identifier strings must be valid IDL variable names, and cannot contain spaces or non-alphanumeric characters other than “_”, “!”, and “\$”. See “[IDL_VALIDNAME](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details on valid IDL variable names.

Note

You can specify the property identifier string using any case; IDL will match the property identifier with the `GetProperty` or `SetProperty` keyword in a case-insensitive manner. As a matter of style, using upper case letters when specifying property identifiers helps someone reading your code visually match the property identifier with the keyword values.

The property identifier is *not* displayed in the property sheet interface; the value of the `NAME` property attribute is displayed instead. However, if you do not supply the `NAME` attribute, the iTool system will assign it the same value as the property identifier.

Property Attributes

Property *attributes* are values associated with a property that affect the way the property is displayed in the iTool property sheet interface. Attributes could be considered *properties-of-properties*; as with actual properties, special methods are used to get and set attribute values.

Note

A property must be *registered* in order to set or retrieve attribute values.

Property attributes can be set in the call to the `IDLitComponent::RegisterProperty` method; simply include the attribute name and its value as a keyword-value pair.

If a property has already been registered, you can change the registered attribute values using the `SetPropertyAttribute` method of the `IDLitComponent` class:

```
self->SetPropertyAttribute, PropertyIdentifier, ATTRIBUTE = value
```

where *PropertyIdentifier* is a string that uniquely identifies the property, *ATTRIBUTE* is one of the property attributes described in [“Available Property Attributes”](#) on page 78, and *value* is the attribute value. See [“Property Identifiers”](#) on page 77 for a discussion of property identifier strings.

A typical property attribute modification call looks like the following:

```
self->SetPropertyAttribute, 'COLOR', NAME = 'Surface color'
```

Here, we change the Name attribute of the COLOR property; when this property is displayed in a property sheet, the label will be `Surface color`.

See [“IDLitComponent::SetPropertyAttribute”](#) in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Available Property Attributes

Every registered iTool property has the following attributes. Property attributes can be specified as keywords to the `RegisterProperty` method of the `IDLitComponent` class. Attributes whose names are followed by the word “Get” can be retrieved using the `GetPropertyAttribute` method of the `IDLitComponent` class; attributes whose names are followed by the word “Set” can be set using the `SetPropertyAttribute` method.

DESCRIPTION (Get, Set)

A string value containing a text description of the property. This string is displayed in the property sheet interface.

ENUMLIST (Get, Set)

An array of string values to be displayed in the property sheet interface as an *enumerated list*. This property type allows the user to select a string value from a dropdown list in the user interface, but returns the integer index of the selected item as the value of the property. This attribute is only used by properties of TYPE = 9 (enumerated list).

HIDE (Get, Set)

A Boolean flag that specifies whether the property should be displayed in the property sheet interface.

NAME (Get, Set)

A string value that is displayed as the property name in the property sheet interface. If the NAME attribute is not specified in the call to the RegisterProperty method, this attribute will be set to the property identifier string.

PROPERTY_IDENTIFIER (Get)

A string value containing the property identifier. See [“Property Identifiers”](#) on page 77 for details.

SENSITIVE (Get, Set)

A Boolean flag that specifies whether the property should be editable by the user when displayed in the property sheet interface. Properties with the SENSITIVE attribute set to 0 are displayed, but are dimmed and are not editable.

TYPE (Get)

The property data type code for the property. See [“Property Data Types”](#) on page 71 for details.

UNDEFINED (Get, Set)

A Boolean flag that indicates that the property should appear as a blank cell when displayed in the property sheet interface. This is useful in situations where properties

of multiple objects are displayed in the property sheet (either because multiple objects are selected, or because the objects have been grouped).

Note

The iTool developer is responsible for setting this property attribute back to zero. Use the `SET_DEFINED` field of the `WIDGET_PROPERTY SHEET` event structure to determine when to set the `UNDEFINED` attribute back to zero.

USERDEF (Get, Set)

A string that represents the value of a user-defined property. See “[User Defined Property Types](#)” on page 73 for details.

VALID_RANGE (Get, Set)

For integer or float types (`TYPE = 2` or `TYPE = 3`), set this keyword to a two- or three-element vector specifying the *[minimum, maximum]* or *[minimum, maximum, increment]* for valid values of the property.

What is displayed for the property sheet number cell depends upon the following:

- If this attribute is not specified — the property sheet displays an editable text field where masked editing is enforced, and the range is that of the data type. The only accepted keystrokes are the ten digits, and the plus and minus signs. If the float type is specified, the decimal, and “d” and “e” (scientific exponent notation tokens) are also allowed.
- If a range is specified without an increment — the property sheet displays a spinner control that allows the user to click, or click and hold the up or down buttons to change the value. For an integer type, the increment is one. For a float type, the increment equals approximately 1/100 of the range. For example, a range of 100 results in an increment of 1. A value is snapped to the nearest allowable value when a value outside the range, or not equal to an incremental value, is entered. The editable text field (featuring masked editing) also allows the user to enter a numerical value.
- If a range and increment are specified — the property sheet displays a slider with a marker that can be repositioned to change the value. A value is snapped to the nearest allowable value when a value outside the range, or not equal to an incremental value, is entered. The increment value must be positive. Specifying an increment of 0 (zero) is the same as specifying a range without an increment. The editable text field (featuring masked editing) also allows the user to enter a numerical value.

Property Aggregation

The iTools *property aggregation* mechanism allows the properties of several different objects held by the same container object to be displayed in the same property sheet automatically. Without property aggregation, you would have to manually register all of the properties of the objects contained in your visualization type object.

Aggregate the properties of contained objects using the `Aggregate` method of the `IDLitVisualization` class:

```
self->Aggregate, Object_Reference
```

where *Object_Reference* is a reference to the object whose properties you want aggregated into the visualization object. A typical property aggregation call looks like the following:

```
self._oSymbol = OBJ_NEW('IDLitSymbol', PARENT = self)
self->Aggregate, self._oSymbol
```

Here, the first line creates an `IDLitSymbol` object and stores it in the `_oSymbol` field of the visualization object's class structure. The second line calls the `Aggregate` method with the object reference to the `IDLitSymbol` object as the argument. After the call to the `Aggregate` method, all registered properties of the `IDLitSymbol` object will be exposed in the property sheet for the visualization itself.

Note

The `IDLitVisualization::Add` method includes an `AGGREGATE` keyword. This keyword is simply a shorthand method of aggregating the properties of an object during the call to the `Add` method, eliminating the need to call the `Aggregate` method separately. The call

```
self->Add, Object_Reference, /AGGREGATE
```

is the same as the following two calls:

```
self->Add, Object_Reference
self->Aggregate, Object_Reference
```

Warning

Take care when naming properties of objects that will be aggregated into a custom visualization. If the complete name of a property in one of the aggregated objects matches the prefix of the name of a property in another of the aggregated objects, IDL will display an “Ambiguous keyword abbreviation” error when the aggregate

object is instantiated. To combine objects with ambiguous property names, you must manually register only the unambiguous property names with each object before calling the `Aggregate` method or using the `AGGREGATE` keyword.

Working with Aggregated Properties

When the properties of multiple objects are aggregated in a visualization object, there are two possible ways to display the combined property set: a *union* or an *intersection*. The way aggregated properties are displayed by a given visualization depends on the value of the visualization's `PROPERTY_INTERSECTION` property: by default, this property is not set (it contains a value of 0), and the union of the aggregated properties is displayed. If `PROPERTY_INTERSECTION` is set to 1 when the visualization object is created, the intersection of the aggregated properties is displayed. The following sections explain the behavior of the property sheet interface in both situations.

Union

By default, a visualization object displays the union of the properties of any aggregated objects. Properties are displayed in the property sheet interface as follows:

- All of the unique properties of all of the aggregated objects are displayed.
- Only one instance of a given property is displayed. This means that if multiple objects have the same property, this property will be displayed only once, and all objects will have the same property value.
- The visualization will appear in iTool browsers as a single object — the aggregated objects will not be visible in the browser hierarchy.

Intersection

If the `PROPERTY_INTERSECTION` property is set when the visualization is created, the visualization object displays the intersection of any aggregated objects. Properties are displayed in the property sheet interface as follows:

- Only properties that are common to all of the aggregated objects are displayed as properties of the visualization object. Changing the value of a common property in the visualization's property sheet changes the value for all aggregated objects.
- The visualization will appear in iTool browsers as a container object — the aggregated objects will be visible beneath the visualization object in the

browser hierarchy (unless the property's **HIDE** attribute is set, in which case the property will not be displayed). Selecting an individual aggregated object in the browser hierarchy will display that object's own properties.

- If the value of a property that is common to all of the aggregated objects is different for different objects, the value will show in the parent container's property sheet as undefined.

Property Update Mechanism

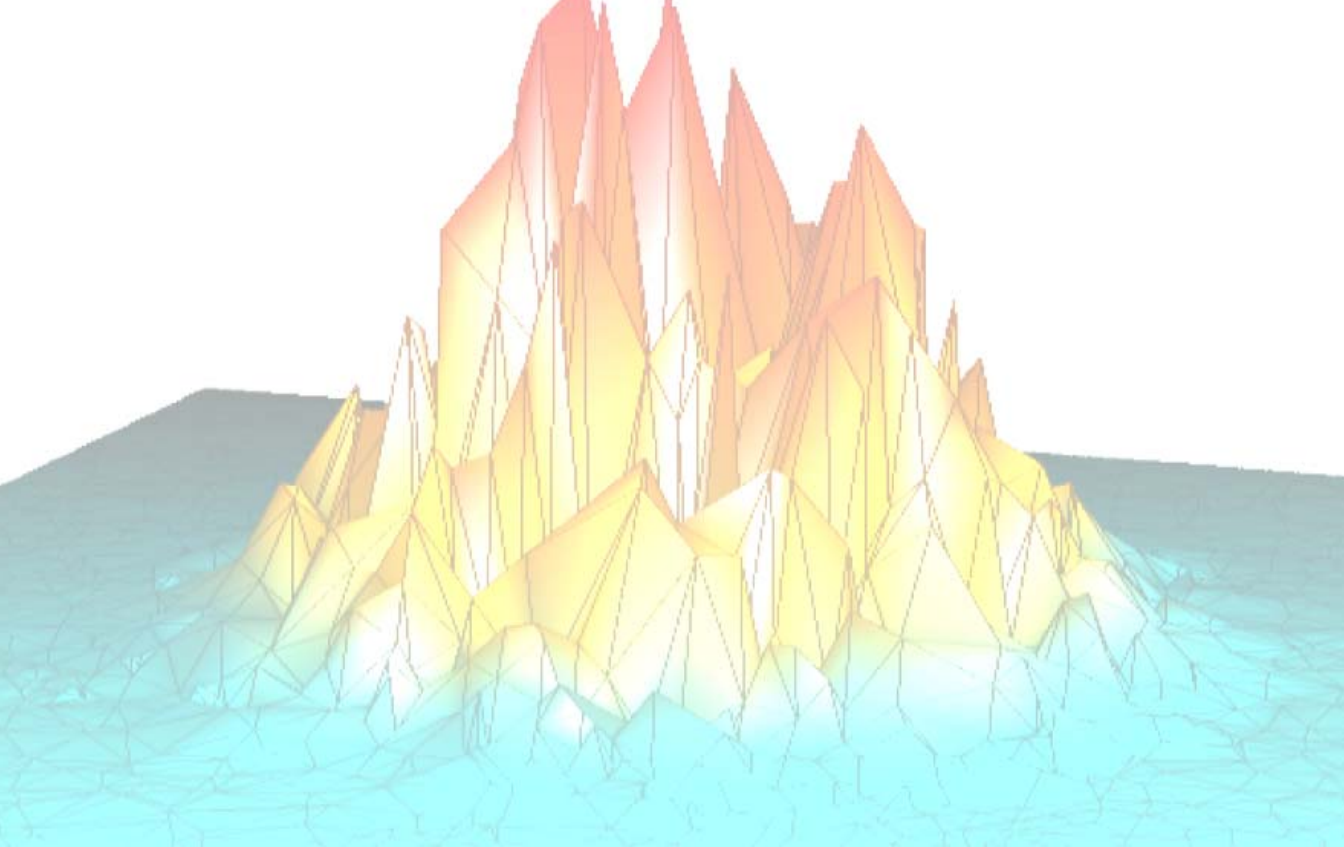
When a user changes the value of a property via the property sheet interface, the object that implements the property is automatically updated. If the object has a visual representation, the display of the iTool window is also updated automatically.

The update mechanism is handled by the `SetProperty` method; as long as any `SetProperty` methods you create call the `SetProperty` methods of their superclasses, there is nothing more you need to do.

Property changes are automatically recorded by the iTool undo/redo system. You do not need to supply any extra code to support undo/redo.

Properties of the iTools System

iTools *system preferences* are default settings for the values of properties of file readers, file writers, and the iTool system itself. System preferences are revealed to the user via the system preferences browser, which is displayed when a user selects **File** → **Preferences** in an iTool.



Part II: Using the iTools Component Framework



Chapter 5

Creating an iTool

This chapter describes the process of creating a new iTool definition and command-line launch routine.

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|--|-----|
| Overview of iTool Creation | 90 | Creating an iTool Launch Routine | 103 |
| Creating a New iTool Class | 91 | Example: Simple iTool | 108 |
| Registering a New Tool Class | 101 | | |

Overview of iTool Creation

Creating a new iTool using the iTools component framework is vastly simpler than creating a similar tool from scratch in IDL. The standard iTool user interface and functionality can be included in any new iTool with a few simple lines of code. Using the iTools framework leaves you free to concentrate on developing functionality unique to your application.

That said, creating even the simplest iTool *does* require that you have a basic familiarity with the concepts of object-oriented programming in general, and with the process of creating object-oriented programs in IDL in particular. If you have written even very simple object-oriented applications in IDL, or in another language such as Java or C++, you probably already have the necessary skills. For background information on writing object-oriented applications in IDL, see [Chapter 13, “Creating Custom Objects in IDL”](#) in the *Object Programming* manual.

The iTool Creation Process

To create a new iTool, you will do the following:

- Choose an iTool object class on which your new tool will be based. In almost all cases, you will base new iTools either on the IDL*IToolbase* class or on an iTool class that is itself based on IDL*IToolbase*. The IDL*IToolbase* class defines all of the standard iTool functionality exposed by the individual iTools included with IDL.
- Define the visualization types, data operations, user interface tools (manipulators), and data import/export features that will be available in your iTool. You can choose from a variety of predefined features included with the iTool system as included with IDL, or you can create your own. The process of defining the features available in your new iTool is discussed in [“Creating a New iTool Class”](#) on page 91.
- Register your new iTool class with the system as described in [“Registering a New Tool Class”](#) on page 101.
- Provide an IDL procedure that creates an instance of your new iTool class, as described in [“Creating an iTool Launch Routine”](#) on page 103.

[This chapter](#) describes the process of creating a new iTool from existing visualization types, operations, manipulators, and file readers and writers. The chapters that follow describe how to create your own visualization types, operations, manipulators, and file readers and writers to be incorporated into new iTools.

Creating a New iTool Class

An iTool object class definition file must contain, at the least, the class Init method and the class structure definition routine. The Init method contains the statements that register any operations, visualizations, manipulators, and file readers or writers available in the iTool. The class structure definition routine defines an IDL structure that will be used when creating new instances of the iTool object.

The process of creating an iTool definition is outlined in the following sections:

- [“Creating the Class Structure Definition”](#) on page 91
- [“Creating an Init Method”](#) on page 93

Creating the Class Structure Definition

When any IDL object is created, IDL looks for an IDL class structure definition that specifies the instance data fields needed by an instance of the object, along with the data types of those fields. The object class structure must have been defined *before* any objects of the type are created. In practice, when the IDL OBJ_NEW function attempts to create an instance of a specified object class, it executes a procedure named *ObjectClass__define* (where *ObjectClass* is the name of the object), which is expected to define an IDL structure variable with the correct name and structure fields. For additional information on how IDL creates object instances, see [“The Object Lifecycle”](#) in Chapter 13 of the *Object Programming* manual.

Note

The class structure definition is generally the last routine in the `.pro` file that defines an object class.

Subclassing from the IDLitToolbase Class

The IDLitToolbase class defines the base operations and user interface functionality used in iTools created by RSI. If your aim is to create an iTool that has base functionality similar to that included in the standard iTools, you will want to subclass from the IDLitToolbase class, or from another tool that subclasses from the IDLitToolbase class.

The IDLitToolbase class registers a large number of operations, manipulators, file readers, and file writers. This base feature set may change from release to release; inspect the file `idlittoolbase__define.pro` in the `lib/itools` subdirectory of your IDL distribution for the exact set of features included in your distribution.

Note

To create an iTool that *does not* include the standard iTool functionality, subclass from the IDLitoolbase class.

In general, the IDLitoolbase class registers the following types of features:

Standard menu items — Operations that appear in the **File**, **Edit**, **Insert**, **Window**, and **Help** menus are defined in the IDLitoolbase class. If you are building a subclass of the IDLitoolbase class, you have the option of adding items to or removing items from these menus in your own class definition file.

Operations menu items — Standard data-centric operations provided as part of the iTools distribution and which appear in all of the standard iTools are placed on the **Operations** menu by the IDLitoolbase class.

Context menu items — Standard operations such as Cut, Copy, Paste, Group, Ungroup, *etc.* are included on the context menu by the IDLitoolbase class.

Toolbar items — Operations that enable standard File and Edit menu functionality are placed on the toolbar by the IDLitoolbase class. In addition, standard manipulators (zoom, arrow, and rotate), and annotations (text, line, rectangle, oval, polygon, and freeform) are placed on the toolbar.

File readers — All file readers included in the iTools distribution are registered by the IDLitoolbase class. File readers do not appear in the iTool interface, but are used automatically when importing a data file.

File writers — All file writers included in the iTools distribution are registered by the IDLitoolbase class. File writers do not appear in the iTool interface, but are used automatically when exporting data to a file.

Example Class Structure Definition

The following is a very simple iTool class structure definition for an iTool named FirstExampleTool. This procedure should be the last procedure in a file named firstexampletool__define.pro.

```
PRO FirstExampleTool__Define
  struct = { FirstExampleTool,          $
             INHERITS IDLitoolbase    $ ; Provides iTool interface
           }
END
```

Discussion

The purpose of the structure definition routine is to define a named IDL structure with structure fields that will contain the iTool object instance data. The structure

name should be the same as the iTool’s class name — in this case, `FirstExampleTool`.

Like many iTools, `FirstExampleTool` is created as a subclass of the `IDLitToolbase` class. iTools that subclass from `IDLitToolbase` inherit all of the standard iTool functionality, as described in “[Subclassing from the IDLitToolbase Class](#)” on page 91.

Note

This example is intended to demonstrate how simple it can be to create a new iTool class definition. While the class definition for an iTool with significant extra functionality will likely define additional structure fields, and may inherit from other iTool classes, the basic principles are the same.

Creating an Init Method

The iTool class `Init` method handles any initialization required by the iTool object, and should do the following:

- define the `Init` function method, using the keyword inheritance mechanism to handle “extra” keywords
- call the `Init` methods of any superclasses, using the keyword inheritance mechanism to pass “extra” keywords
- register visualizations, operations, manipulators, and file readers/writers available in the new iTool but not registered by any superclasses
- perform other initialization steps as necessary
- return the value 1 if the initialization steps are successful, or 0 otherwise

Definition of the Init Function

Begin by defining the argument and keyword list for your `Init` method. The argument and keyword list defines positional parameters (arguments) accepted by your method, defines any keywords that will be handled directly by your method, and specifies that keywords not explicitly handled by your method will be passed through to other routines called by your method via IDL’s keyword inheritance mechanism. The `Init` method for a tool generally looks something like this:

```
FUNCTION MyTool::Init, MYKEYWORD1 = mykeyword1, $
    MYKEYWORD2 = mykeyword2, ..., _REF_EXTRA = _extra
```

where *MyTool* is the name of your tool class and the *MYKEYWORD* parameters are keywords handled explicitly by your `Init` function.

Note

Always use keyword inheritance (the `_REF_EXTRA` keyword) to pass keyword parameters through to any called routines. See “[Keyword Inheritance](#)” in Chapter 5 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for details on IDL’s keyword inheritance mechanism.

Superclass Initialization

The `iTool` class `Init` method should call the `Init` method of any required superclasses. For example, if your `iTool` is based on an existing `iTool`, you would call that tool’s `Init` method:

```
success = self->SomeToolClass::Init(_EXTRA = _extra)
```

where `SomeToolClass` is the class definition file for the `iTool` on which your new `iTool` is based. The variable `success` contains a 1 if the initialization was successful.

Note

Your `iTool` class may have multiple superclasses. In general, each superclass’ `Init` method should be invoked by your class’ `Init` method.

Error Checking

Rather than simply calling the superclass `Init` method, it is a good idea to check whether the call to the superclass `Init` method succeeded. The following statement checks the value returned by the superclass `Init` method; if the returned value is 0 (indicating failure), the current `Init` method also immediately returns with a value of 0:

```
IF (self->SomeToolClass::Init(_EXTRA = _extra) EQ 0) THEN RETURN,  
0
```

This convention is used in all `iTool` classes included with IDL. RSI strongly suggests that you include similar checks in your own class definition files.

Keywords to the Init Method

Properties of the `iTool` class can be set in the `Init` method by specifying the property names and values as IDL keyword-value pairs. In addition to any keywords implemented directly in the `Init` method of the superclass on which you base your class, the properties of the `IDLitTool` class are available to any `iTool` class. See “[IDLitTool Properties](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual.

Note

Always use keyword inheritance (the `_EXTRA` keyword) to pass keyword parameters through to the superclass. See “[Keyword Inheritance](#)” in Chapter 5 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for details on IDL’s keyword inheritance mechanism.

Standard Base Class

While you can create your new iTool from any existing iTool class, in many cases, iTool classes you create will be subclassed directly from the base class `IDLitToolbase`:

```
IF (self->IDLitToolbase::Init(_EXTRA = _extra) EQ 0) THEN $
    RETURN, 0
```

The `IDLitToolbase` class provides the base iTool functionality used in the tools created by RSI. See “[Subclassing from the IDLitToolbase Class](#)” on page 91 for details.

Note

To create an iTool that *does not* include the standard iTool functionality, subclass from the `IDLitTool` class.

Return Value

If all of the routines and methods used in the `Init` method execute successfully, the method should indicate successful initialization by returning 1. Other iTools that subclass from your iTool class may check this return value, as your routine should check the value returned by any superclass `Init` methods called.

Registering Visualizations

Registering a visualization type with an iTool class allows instances of the iTool to create and display visualizations of that type. Any number of visualization types can be registered for use by a given iTool.

Note

You must register at least one visualization type with your iTool class. Unlike operations, manipulators, and file readers and writers, no visualization types are registered by the `IDLitToolbase` class.

Visualization types are registered by calling the `IDLitTool::RegisterVisualization` method:

```
self->RegisterVisualization, Visualization_Type, $
    VisType_Class_Name
```

where *Visualization_Type* is the string you will use when referring to the visualization type, and *VisType_Class_Name* is a string that specifies the name of the class file that contains the visualization type's definition.

Note

The file *VisType_Class_Name__define.pro* must exist somewhere in IDL's path for the visualization type to be successfully registered.

For example, the following method call registers a visualization type named `myVis` for which the class definition is stored in the file `myVisualization__define.pro`:

```
self->RegisterVisualization, 'myVis', 'myVisualization'
```

See [“Registering a Visualization Type”](#) on page 136 for additional details. See [“Predefined iTool Visualization Classes”](#) on page 115 for a list of visualization types included in the iTool system as installed with IDL.

Registering Operations

Registering an operation with an iTool class allows instances of the iTool to apply the registered operation to data selected in the iTool. Any number of operations can be registered with a given iTool.

Operations are registered by calling the `IDLitTool::RegisterOperation` method:

```
self->RegisterOperation, Operation_Type, OpType_Class_Name, $
    IDENTIFIER = identifier
```

where *Operation_Type* is the string you will use when referring to the operation, *OpType_Class_Name* is a string that specifies the name of the class file that contains the operation's definition, and *identifier* is a string containing the operation's iTool identifier. (The identifier is used to specify where on the iTool's menu bar the operation will appear. See [“iTool Object Identifiers”](#) on page 28 for a discussion of iTool system identifiers.)

Note

The file *OpType_Class_Name__define.pro* must exist somewhere in IDL's path for the visualization type to be successfully registered.

For example, the following method call registers an operation named `myOp` for which the class definition is stored in the file `myOperation__define.pro`, and places the menu selection `Change My Data` in the `Filters` folder of the iTool Operations menu.

```
self->RegisterVisualization, 'myOp', 'myOperation', $
    IDENTIFIER = 'Operations/Filters/Change My Data'
```

See [“Registering an Operation”](#) on page 182 for additional details. See [“Predefined iTool Operations”](#) on page 148 for a list of operations included in the iTool system as installed with IDL.

Registering Manipulators

Registering a manipulator with an iTool class allows instances of the iTool to enable the registered manipulator for use in the iTool. Any number of manipulators can be registered with a given iTool.

Manipulators are registered by calling the `IDLitTool::RegisterManipulator` method:

```
self -> RegisterManipulator, ManipulatorName, $
    Manipulator_Class_Name, ICON = icon
```

where *ManipulatorName* is the string you will use when referring to the manipulator, *Manipulator_Class_Name* is a string that specifies the name of the class file that contains the manipulator’s definition, and *icon* is a string containing the name of a bitmap file to be used in the toolbar button. (See [“Icon Bitmaps”](#) on page 44 for details on where bitmap icon files are located.).

Note

The file *Manipulator_Class_Name__define.pro* must exist somewhere in IDL’s path for the visualization type to be successfully registered.

For example, the following method call registers a manipulator named `myManip` for which the class definition is stored in the file `myManipulator__define.pro`, and specifies the file `arrow.bmp` located in the `bitmaps` subdirectory of the `resource` subdirectory of the IDL distribution as the icon to use on the toolbar.

```
self -> RegisterManipulator, 'myManip', 'myManipulator', $
    ICON = 'arrow'
```

See [“Registering a Manipulator”](#) on page 222 for additional details. See [“Predefined iTool Manipulators”](#) on page 198 for a list of manipulators included in the iTool system as installed with IDL.

Registering File Readers and Writers

Registering a file reader or file writer with an iTool class allows instances of the iTool to read or write files of the type handled by the reader or writer. Any number of file readers and writers can be registered with a given iTool.

File readers are registered by calling the `IDLitTool::RegisterFileReader` method:

```
self->RegisterFileReader, Reader_Type, ReaderType_Class_Name, $
    ICON = icon
```

where *Reader_Type* is the string you will use when referring to the file reader, *ReaderType_Class_Name* is a string that specifies the name of the class file that contains the file writer's definition, and *icon* is a string containing the name of a bitmap file used to represent the file reader.

Similarly, file writers are registered by calling the `IDLitTool::RegisterFileWriter` method:

```
self->RegisterFileWriter, Writer_Type, WriterType_Class_Name, $
    ICON = icon
```

where *Reader_Type* is the string you will use when referring to the file reader, *ReaderType_Class_Name* is a string that specifies the name of the class file that contains the file writer's definition, and *icon* is a string containing the name of a bitmap file used to represent the file writer. See [“Icon Bitmaps”](#) on page 44 for details on where bitmap icon files are located.

Note

The class definition files *ReaderType_Class_Name__define.pro* or *WriterType_Class_Name__define.pro* must exist somewhere in IDL's path for the file reader or writer to be successfully registered.

For example, the following method call registers a file reader named `myReader` for which the class definition is stored in the file `myFileReader__define.pro`, and specifies the file `reader.bmp` located in the `home/mydir` directory as the icon to use on the toolbar.

```
self->RegisterFileReader, 'myReader', 'myFileReader', $
    ICON = '/home/mydir/reader.bmp'
```

See [“Registering a File Reader”](#) on page 245 for additional details. See [“Predefined iTool File Readers”](#) on page 231 for a list of file readers included in the iTool system as installed with IDL.

Similarly, the following method call registers a file writer named `myWriter` for which the class definition is stored in the file `myFileWriter__define.pro`, and

specifies the file writer .bmp located in the home/mydir directory as the icon to use on the toolbar.

```
self->RegisterFileReader, 'myWriter', 'myFileWriter', $
    ICON = '/home/mydir/writer.bmp'
```

See “[Registering a File Writer](#)” on page 270 for additional details. See “[Predefined iTool File Writers](#)” on page 255 for a list of file writers included in the iTool system as installed with IDL.

Example Init Method

The following example code shows a very simple Init method for an iTool named FirstExampleTool. This function should be included in a file named FirstExampleTool__define.pro.

```
FUNCTION FirstExampleTool::Init, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

; Call the Init method of the super class.
IF (self->IDLitToolbase::Init(NAME='FirstExampleTool', $
    DESCRIPTION = 'Example Tool Class', _EXTRA = _extra) EQ 0) THEN
$
    RETURN, 0

; Register a visualization
self->RegisterVisualization, 'Image', 'IDLitVisImage', $
    ICON = 'image'

; Register an operation
self->RegisterOperation, 'Byte Scale', 'IDLitOpBytScl', $
    IDENTIFIER = 'Operations/Byte Scale'

RETURN, 1

END
```

Discussion

The FirstExampleTool is based on the IDLitToolbase class (discussed in “[Subclassing from the IDLitToolbase Class](#)” on page 91). As a result, all of the standard iTool operations, manipulators, file readers and writers are already present. The FirstExampleTool Init method needs to do only three things:

1. Call the Init method of the superclass, IDLitToolbase, using the _EXTRA keyword inheritance mechanism to pass through any keywords provided when the FirstExampleTool Init method is called.

2. Register a visualization type for the tool. We choose the standard image visualization defined by the `idlitvisimage__define.pro` class definition file,
3. Register an operation. We choose an operation that implements the IDL BYTSCL function, defined by the `idlitopbytscl__define.pro` class definition file and place a menu item in the iTool Operations menu.

Note

This example is intended to demonstrate how simple it can be to create a new iTool class definition. While the class definition for an iTool with significant extra functionality will register more features, the process is the same.

Unregistering Components

In some cases, you may want to subclass from an iTool class that contains features you do not want to include in your class. Rather than building a class that duplicates most, but not all, of the functionality of the existing class, you can create a subclass that explicitly *unregisters* the components that you don't want included.

For each Register method of the IDLitTool class there is a corresponding UnRegister method. Call the UnRegister method with the *Name* you used when registering the component. For example, if your superclass registers an operation with the identifier 'MultiplyBy100' and you do not want this operation included in your class, you would include the following method call in your iTool class Init method:

```
self->UnRegisterOperation, 'MultiplyBy100'
```

Registering a New Tool Class

Before an instance of a new iTool can be created, the tool's class definition must be registered with the iTool system. Registering an iTool class with the system links the class definition file containing the actual IDL code that initializes an iTool object with a simple string that names the iTool. Since you use the name string in code that creates instances of individual tools, a change to the name of the class definition file requires only a change to the code that registers the iTool class.

iTool classes are registered using the ITREGISTER procedure. In most cases, the call to the ITREGISTER procedure will be included in an iTool's launch routine, but the call can take place in any code at any time. If multiple iTool launch routines create instances of the same iTool class, however, you may find it more convenient to register the iTool in a single routine, called only once. This removes the need to call the registration routine in each launch routine individually.

Note

If only a small number of routines will create instances of a given iTool, you may find it more convenient to register the iTool class within the tool launch routine.

Using ITREGISTER

Use the ITREGISTER routine to register the class definition:

```
ITREGISTER, 'Tool Name', 'Tool_Class_Name'
```

where *Tool Name* is a string you will use to create instances of the tool, and *Tool_Class_Name* is a string that specifies the name of the class file that contains the tool's definition.

Note

The file *Tool_Class_Name__define.pro* must exist somewhere in IDL's path for the tool definition to be successfully registered.

If a given iTool class has already been registered when the ITREGISTER routine is called, the class will not be registered a second time. The registration can be performed at any time in an IDL session before you attempt to create an instance of the iTool.

See “[ITREGISTER](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

Example

Suppose you have an iTool class definition file named `myTool__define.pro`, located in a directory included in IDL's `!PATH` system variable. Register this class with the iTool system with the following command:

```
ITREGISTER, 'My First Tool', 'myTool'
```

Tools defined by the `myTool` class definition file can now be created by the iTool system by specifying the tool name `My First Tool`. In most cases, this command would be included in the launch routine for the `myTool` iTool, but the call can be placed in any code that is executed before the first instance of the iTool is created.

Creating an iTool Launch Routine

An iTool launch routine is an IDL procedure that creates an instance of an iTool by calling the `IDLITSYS_CREATETOOL` function. The launch routine may do other things as well, including creating data objects to pass to the create function from command-line arguments.

The process of creating an iTool launch routine is outlined in the following sections:

- “[Specifying Command-Line Arguments and Keywords](#)” on page 103
- “[Creating Data Objects](#)” on page 104
- “[Handling Errors](#)” on page 105
- “[Creating an iTool Instance](#)” on page 106

Specifying Command-Line Arguments and Keywords

If you want to be able to specify data to be loaded into your iTool when launching the tool from the IDL command line, you must specify positional arguments or keywords in the procedure definition. The procedure definition for an iTool launch routine may look something like the following:

```
PRO myTool, A1, A2, MYKEYWORD = myKeys, IDENTIFIER = id, $
    _EXTRA = _extra
```

Here, there are two positional parameters (or arguments) and three keyword parameters are specified.

Arguments

Data arguments are specified in an iTool launch routine as with any IDL procedure. See “[Parameters](#)” in Chapter 5 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for details on arguments.

Keywords

Keyword arguments to an iTool launch routine are handled as with any IDL procedure. See “[Parameters](#)” in Chapter 5 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for details on keyword arguments. In addition, you may want to include the following keyword arguments in the definition of the launch routine:

The IDENTIFIER Keyword

The `IDENTIFIER` keyword is used to return the iTool system identifier string for the newly created tool. You must set the variable specified by the `IDENTIFIER` keyword

equal to the return value of the `IDLITSYS_CREATETOOL` function. This allows the user to retrieve the newly-created iTool's identifier in an IDL variable by including the `IDENTIFIER` keyword in the call to the launch routine. The iTool identifier can then be used to specify the iTool as the target for another operation, such as overplotting.

The `_EXTRA` Keyword

Optionally, you can use IDL's keyword inheritance mechanism to pass keyword parameters that are not explicitly handled by your routine through to other routines. See “[Keyword Inheritance](#)” in Chapter 5 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for details on IDL's keyword inheritance mechanism.

Creating Data Objects

If your iTool launch routine allows users to specify data arguments (as opposed to keywords that are passed through to the iTool component objects), you must process those arguments and create an `IDLitParameterSet` object to be passed to the `IDLITSYS_CREATETOOL` function. Parameter sets, data types, and general iTool system data handling concepts are discussed in detail in [Chapter 3, “Data Management”](#).

Parameter Sets

Data is passed to a newly-created iTool instance by supplying an `IDLitParameterSet` object as the value of the `INITIAL_DATA` keyword to the `IDLITSYS_CREATETOOL` function. To create a parameter set object, use the `OBJ_NEW` function:

```
oParameterSet = OBJ_NEW('IDLitParameterSet', NAME = paramSetName)
```

where `oParameterSet` is a named variable that will hold the object reference to the parameter set object and `paramSetName` is a string that will be used by the iTool user interface to refer to the parameter set.

For example, if you are creating a data container to hold X and Y vectors to be plotted in two-dimensions, you might use the following code:

```
oPlotData = OBJ_NEW('IDLitParameterSet', NAME = 'Plot data')
```

See [Chapter 3, “Data Management”](#), and “[IDLitParameterSet](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

Data Items

The parameter set object holds objects of type `IDLitData`, or objects of types derived from `IDLitData`, such as `IDLitDataImage` or `IDLitDataVector`. These data objects, in turn, hold the actual data used by the iTool. To create a data object, use the `OBJ_NEW` function:

```
oData = OBJ_NEW('IDLitData', vData, TYPE = dataType, $
               NAME = dataName)
```

where `oData` is a named variable that will hold the object reference to the data object, `vData` is an IDL variable containing the actual data, `dataType` is a string specifying the iTool data type of the data held by the object, and `dataName` is a string that will be used by the iTool user interface to refer to the data object. See [“iTool Data Types”](#) on page 54 for additional information on iTool data types.

For example, if you are creating a data object to hold the Y vector of a two-dimensional plot, you might use the following code:

```
oPlotY = OBJ_NEW('IDLitData', yData, TYPE = 'IDLVECTOR', $
                NAME = 'Y data')
```

Here, the data that make up the Y vector are contained in the variable `yData`. After a data item has been created, it must be added to the parameter set object. Continuing our example, the following code adds the `oPlotY` data object to the `oPlotData` parameter set object, assigning the parameter name 'Y data':

```
oPlotData->Add, oPlotY, PARAMETER_NAME='Y data'
```

See [Chapter 3, “Data Management”](#), and [“IDLitData”](#) in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

Example

For an example iTool launch routine that creates and populates a parameter set object, see [“Example: Simple iTool”](#) on page 108.

Handling Errors

The error-handling requirements of your iTool launch routine will depend largely on the type of data processing you perform. In general, your goal should be to clean up any objects or pointers your routine creates, display an error message to the user, and return to the calling routine. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss IDL’s error handling mechanisms in detail; for more information see [Chapter 8, “Debugging and Error-Handling”](#) in the *Building IDL Applications* manual.

iTool launch routines included in the IDL distribution handle errors by placing a block of IDL code that looks like the following at the beginning of the routine:

```
ON_ERROR, 2
CATCH, iErr
IF (iErr NE 0) THEN BEGIN
    CATCH, /CANCEL
    IF OBJ_VALID(oDataObject) THEN OBJ_DESTROY, oDataObject
    MESSAGE, /REISSUE_LAST
    RETURN
ENDIF
```

This block of error-handling code does the following:

1. Uses the ON_ERROR procedure to instruct IDL to return to the caller of the program that establishes an error condition.
2. Uses the CATCH procedure to establish an error-handler for the iTool launch routine, returning the error code in the variable `iErr`.
3. If the value of `iErr` is not 0 (that is, if an error is detected), do the following:
 - Use the CATCH procedure again to cancel the error handler.
 - Destroy any data objects created by the launch routine. In most cases, destroying the data container object (represented here by `oDataObject`) will be sufficient to destroy all objects added to the data container.
 - Use the MESSAGE routine to display the error message in the IDL output log.

Once these tasks have been accomplished, use the RETURN procedure to return to the routine that called the iTool launch routine, or to the IDL Main level, if the launch routine was invoked at the IDL command prompt.

Depending on the complexity of your iTool launch routine, additional cleanup may be required. For example, you may need to free IDL pointers created by the launch routine. In many cases, however, error-handling code similar to that used in the standard iTool launch routines will be sufficiently robust.

Creating an iTool Instance

Create an instance of your iTool class by calling the IDLITSYS_CREATETOOL function:

```
id = IDLITSYS_CREATETOOL('Tool Name', NAME = 'Tool Label', $
    VISUALIZATION_TYPE = 'VisType', $
    INITIAL_DATA = 'oDataContainer', _EXTRA = _extra)
```

where *Tool Name* is the name of a previously-registered iTool class, *Tool Label* is a text label that will be used in the iTool user interface to identify this instance of the iTool, *VisType* is the name of a previously-registered iTool visualization type (or array of visualization types), and *oDataContainer* is an IDLitDataContainer object created from the values specified as arguments or keywords.

We also use IDL's keyword inheritance mechanism (the `_EXTRA` keyword) to pass any additional keyword parameters specified when the launch routine is called through to the lower-level iTool routines.

See “[IDLITSYS_CREATETOOL](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

iTool Class Registration

Before an instance of an iTool can be created, the iTool class must be registered with the iTool system. An iTool class can be registered with the system within the launch routine by calling the `ITREGISTER` routine, but you may benefit from registering iTool classes separately. See “[Registering a New Tool Class](#)” on page 101 for details.

iTool Visualization Type Registration

Similarly, the visualization type or types specified by the `VISUALIZATION_TYPE` keyword must have been registered with the system. In most cases, visualizations will either be predefined iTool visualizations (see “[Predefined iTool Visualization Classes](#)” on page 115) or will be registered in the iTool class' `Init` method, as described in “[Creating a New iTool Class](#)” on page 91. All iTools must have at least one visualization type. Multiple visualization types are specified by supplying a string array as the value of the `VISUALIZATION_TYPE` property.

Note

Once a visualization type has been registered with the iTool system, it is available to *all* iTools launched during an IDL session. This means that the list of visualization types available to a given iTool can change if other iTools are launched.

Example: Simple iTool

This example creates a very simple iTool named `example1tool` that incorporates standard functionality from the iTools distribution, along with other example iTool features created in other chapters of this manual.

Example Code

The class definition code for this example iTool is included in the file `example1tool__define.pro` in the `examples/doc/itools` subdirectory of the IDL distribution. Enter

```
example1tool
```

at the IDL prompt to create an instance of the iTool. Open the file in any text editor or enter

```
.edit example1tool__define
```

at the IDLDE prompt to open the `.pro` file in the IDL editor.

Class Definition File

The class definition for the `example1tool` consists of an `Init` method and a class structure definition routine. As with all object class definition files, the class structure definition routine is the last routine in the file, and the file is given the same name as the class definition routine (with the suffix `.pro` appended).

Class Definition

```
PRO example1tool__Define

struct = { example1tool,           $
           INHERITS IDLitToolbase $ ; Provides iTool interface
         }

END
```

Discussion

Our class definition routine is very simple. We create an IDL structure variable with the name `example1tool`, specifying that the structure inherits from the `IDLitToolbase` class.

Init Method

```

FUNCTION example1tool::Init, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

; Call our super class
IF ( self->IDLitToolbase::Init(_EXTRA = _extra) EQ 0) THEN $
    RETURN, 0

;*** Visualizations
; Here we register a custom visualization type described in
; the "Creating Visualizations" chapter of this manual.

self->RegisterVisualization, 'Image-Contour', $
    'example1_visImageContour', ICON = 'image', /DEFAULT

;*** Operations menu
; Here we register a custom operation described in the "Creating
; Operations" chapter of this manual.

self->RegisterOperation, 'Example Resample', $
    'example1_opResample', $
    IDENTIFIER = 'Operations/Examples/Resample'

;*** File Readers
; Here we register a custom file reader described in the
; "Creating File Readers" chapter of this manual.

self->RegisterFileReader, 'Example TIFF Reader', $
    'example1_readTIFF', ICON='demo', /DEFAULT

;*** File Writers
; Here we unregister one of the standard file writers used
; by the iTools, replacing it with a custom file writer
; described in the "Creating File Writers" chapter of this
; manual.

self->UnRegisterFileWriter, 'Tag Image File Format'

self->RegisterFileWriter, 'Example TIFF Writer', $
    'example1_writetiff', ICON='demo', /DEFAULT

RETURN, 1

END

```

Discussion

The first item in our class definition file is the Init method. The Init method's function signature is defined first, using the class name `example1tool`. Note the use of

the `_REF_EXTRA` keyword inheritance mechanism; this allows any keywords specified in a call to the `Init` method to be passed through to routines that are called within the `Init` method even if we do not know the names of those keywords in advance.

Next, we call the `Init` method of the superclass. In this case, we are creating a subclass of the `IDLitToolbase` class; this provides us with all of the standard `iTool` functionality automatically. Any “extra” keywords specified in the call to our `Init` method are passed to the `IDLitToolbase::Init` method via the keyword inheritance mechanism.

Because our `iTool` class will inherit from the `IDLitToolbase` class, our tool will automatically provide all of the standard features of the `iTools`. In addition, we register the following custom items:

- A custom visualization type: `Image-Contour`. This visualization type is described in [Chapter 6, “Creating a Visualization”](#).
- A new operation: `Example Resample`. This operation is described in [Chapter 7, “Creating an Operation”](#).
- A new file reader: `Example TIFF Reader`. This file reader is described in [Chapter 9, “Creating a File Reader”](#).
- We unregister the standard `TIFF` file writer, and register our a new filewriter: `Example TIFF Writer`. This file reader is described in [Chapter 10, “Creating a File Writer”](#).

Finally, we return the value `1` to indicate successful initialization.

Launch Routine

Our `iTool` launch routine also uses the class name `example1tool`. It accepts a single data argument, which we assume will contain an image array.

Example Code

The code for this example `iTool` launch routine is included in the file `example1tool.pro` in the `examples/doc/itools` subdirectory of the IDL distribution. Enter

```
example1tool
```

at the IDL prompt to create an instance of the `iTool`. Open the file in any text editor or enter

```
.edit example1tool
```

at the IDLDE prompt to open the `.pro` file in the IDL editor.

The code is shown below:

```
PRO example1tool, data, IDENTIFIER = identifier,
  _EXTRA = _extra

IF (N_PARAMS() gt 0) THEN BEGIN
  oParmSet = OBJ_NEW('IDLitParameterSet', $
    NAME = 'example 1 parameters', $
    ICON = 'image', $
    DESCRIPTION = 'Example tool parameters')

  IF (N_ELEMENTS(data) GT 0) THEN BEGIN
    oData = OBJ_NEW('IDLitDataIDLImagePixels')
    result = oData->SetData(data, _EXTRA = _extra)
    oParmSet->Add, oData, PARAMETER_NAME = 'ImagePixels'

    ; Create a default grayscale ramp.
    ramp = BINDGEN(256)
    oPalette = OBJ_NEW('IDLitDataIDLPalette', $
      TRANSPOSE([[ramp], [ramp], [ramp]]), $
      NAME = 'Palette')
    oParmSet->Add, oPalette, PARAMETER_NAME = 'PALETTE'

  ENDIF

ENDIF

ITREGISTER, 'Example 1 Tool', 'example1tool'

identifier = IDLITSYS_CREATETOOL('Example 1 Tool', $
  VISUALIZATION_TYPE = ['Image-Contour'], $
  INITIAL_DATA = oParmSet, _EXTRA = _extra, $
  TITLE = 'First Example iTool')

END
```

Launch Routine Discussion

Our iTool launch routine accepts a single *data* argument. We also specify that our launch routine should accept the `IDENTIFIER` keyword; we will use the variable

specified as the value of this keyword (if any) to return the iTool identifier of the new iTool we create.

First, we check the number of non-keyword arguments that were supplied using the `N_PARAMS` function. If an argument was supplied, we create an `IDLitParameterSet` object to hold the data.

Next, we check to make sure the supplied data argument is not empty using the `N_ELEMENTS` function. If the supplied argument contains data, we create an `IDLitDataIDLImagePixels` object to contain the image data and add the object to our parameter set object, assigning the parameter name `'ImagePixels'`.

Note

In the interest of brevity, we do very little data verification in this example. We could, for example, verify that the data argument contains a two-dimensional array of a specified type.

We next create a default grayscale ramp in an `IDLitDataIDLPalette` object, and assign this the parameter name `'Palette'`.

We use the `ITREGISTER` procedure to register our iTool class with the name `"Example 1 Tool"`.

Finally, we call the `IDLITSYS_CREATETOOL` function with the registered name of our iTool class, specifying the visualization type as `'Image-Contour'`, which is the name of our custom visualization.



Chapter 6

Creating a Visualization

This chapter describes the process of creating an iTool visualization type.

| | | | |
|--|-----|--|-----|
| Overview of iTool Visualization Types . . . | 114 | Registering a Visualization Type | 136 |
| Predefined iTool Visualization Classes . . . | 115 | Unregistering a Visualization Type | 138 |
| Creating a New Visualization Type | 121 | Example: Image-Contour Visualization . . | 140 |

Overview of iTool Visualization Types

A *visualization type* is an iTool component object class that contains core IDL graphic objects (IDLgrPlot objects, for example), other iTool visualization components, or both. Visualization type components can also contain data. A number of visualization types are predefined and included in the IDL iTools package. If none of the predefined types suits your needs, you can create your own visualization type by subclassing either from one of the predefined types or from the base IDLitVisualization class on which all of the predefined types are based.

The Visualization Type Creation Process

To create a new iTool visualization type, you will do the following:

- Choose an iTool visualization class on which your new visualization type will be based. In almost all cases, you will base new visualization types either on the IDLitVisualization class or on a visualization class that is itself based on IDLitVisualization. The IDLitVisualization class automatically handles selection, selection visuals, data ranges, and notification of data changes.
- Define the data parameters necessary to create a visualization of the new type.
- Define the properties of the visualization, and set default property values.
- Override methods used to get or set properties, react to changes in the underlying data, and clean up, as necessary.

[This chapter](#) describes the process of creating a new visualization type based on the IDLitVisualization class.

Predefined iTool Visualization Classes

The iTool system distributed with IDL includes a number of predefined visualization classes. The visualization type (the `TYPE` keyword value of the visualization with which it is initialized) and the accepted data type(s) are shown for the predefined visualization classes. You can include these visualization classes in an iTool directly by registering the class with your iTool (as described in [“Registering a Visualization Type”](#) on page 136). You can also create a new visualization class based on one of the predefined classes. Visualization classes are located in the `lib/itools/components` subdirectory of the IDL directory.

IDLitVisAxis

Displays a single axis object.

Visualization type: `IDLAXIS`

Data Types Accepted

- None

IDLitVisColorbar

Displays a color bar.

Visualization type: `IDLCOLORBAR`

Data Types Accepted

- Palette data: `IDLPALETTE`

IDLitVisContour

Displays a two-dimensional or three-dimensional contour plot.

Visualization type: `IDLCONTOUR`

Data Types Accepted

- Z data: `IDLARRAY2D`
- X and Y data: `IDLVECTOR`

IDLitVisHistogram

Displays a histogram plot of the input data.

Visualization type: `IDLPLOT`

Data Types Accepted

- Histogram data: IDLVECTOR, IDLARRAY2D, IDLARRAY3D

IDLitVisImage

Displays an image.

Visualization type: IDLIMAGE

Data Types Accepted

- Image data: IDLIMAGE, IDLARRAY2D
- Palette data: IDLPALETTE, IDLARRAY2D

IDLitVisImagePlane

Displays an image extracted from a plane passing through volumetric data.

Visualization type: IDLIMAGE PLANE

Data Types Accepted

- Image data: IDLIMAGE, IDLARRAY2D
- Palette data: IDLPALETTE, IDLARRAY2D

IDLitVisIntVol

Displays an interval volume.

Visualization type: IDLINTERNAL VOLUME

Data Types Accepted

- Volume data: IDLARRAY3D
- Palette data: IDLPALETTE
- Volume dimensions, location, connectivity lists: IDLVECTOR

IDLitVisIsosurface

Displays an isosurface created from existing volume data.

Visualization type: IDLISOSURFACE

Data Types Accepted

- Volume data: IDLARRAY3D

- Palette data: IDLPALETTE
- Volume dimensions, location, connectivity lists: IDLVECTOR

IDLitVisLegend

Displays a legend that can contain multiple IDLitVisLegendContourItem, IDLitVisLegendPlotItem, and IDLitVisLegendSurfaceItem objects.

Visualization type: IDLLEGEND

Data Types Accepted

- None

IDLitVisLegendItem

Displays an item contained within a legend.

Visualization type: IDLLEGENDITEM

Data Types Accepted

- None

IDLitVisLight

Places a light object in the iTool visualization window to illuminate surface and volume objects.

Visualization type: IDLLIGHT

Data Types Accepted

- None

IDLitVisLineProfile

Displays a line profile visualization.

Visualization type: IDLLINEPROFILE

Data Types Accepted

- Line data (2D or 3D): IDLARRAY2D

IDLitVisMapGrid

Displays a longitudinal/latitudinal grid.

Visualization type: IDLMAPGRID

Data Types Accepted

- None.

IDLitVisPlot

Displays a two-dimensional line plot.

Visualization type: IDLPLOT

Data Types Accepted

- X and Y data: IDLVECTOR
- Vertex data: IDLARRAY2D
- X and Y error data: IDLVECTOR, IDLARRAY2D

IDLitVisPlotProfile

Displays a two-dimensional plot profile.

Visualization type: IDLPLOT PROFILE

Data Types Accepted

- Image data or line endpoints: IDLARRAY2D

IDLitVisPlot3D

Displays a three-dimensional line plot.

Visualization type: IDLPLOT3D

Data Types Accepted

- X, Y, and Z data: IDLVECTOR
- Vertex data: IDLARRAY2D
- X, Y, and Z error data: IDLVECTOR, IDLARRAY2D

IDLitVisPolygon

Displays a polygon annotation.

Visualization type: IDLPOLYGON

Data Types Accepted

- Vertex data: IDLVERTEX, IDLCONNECTIVITY

IDLitVisPolyline

Displays a single polyline.

Visualization type: IDLPOLYLINE

Data Types Accepted

- Vertex data: IDLVERTEX, IDLCONNECTIVITY

IDLitVisRoi

Defines and displays a polygonal region of interest.

Visualization type: IDLROI

Data Types Accepted

- Vertex data: IDLARRAY2D

IDLitVisShapePoint

Displays point vertices from a Shapefile.

Visualization type: IDLSHAPEPOINT

Data Types Accepted

- Vertex data: IDLVERTEX, IDLCONNECTIVITY, IDLSHAPEPOINT

IDLitVisShapePolygon

Displays polygon vertices from a Shapefile.

Visualization type: IDLSHAPEPOLYGON

Data Types Accepted

- Vertex data: IDLVERTEX, IDLCONNECTIVITY, IDLSHAPEPOLYGON

IDLitVisShapePolyline

Displays polyline vertices from a Shapefile.

Visualization type: IDLSHAPEPOLYLINE

Data Types Accepted

- Vertex data: IDLVERTEX, IDLCONNECTIVITY, IDLSHAPEPOLYLINE

IDLitVisSurface

Displays a three-dimensional surface plot.

Visualization type: IDLSURFACE

Data Types Accepted

- Z (surface) data: IDLARRAY2D
- X and Y data: IDLVECTOR, IDLARRAY2D
- Vertex color data: IDLVECTOR, IDLARRAY2D
- Texture maps: IDLARRAY3D, IDLARRAY2D
- Palette colors: IDLARRAY2D

IDLitVisText

Displays text string.

Visualization type: IDLTEXT

Data Types Accepted

- Location data: IDLVECTOR

IDLitVisVolume

Displays a three-dimensional volume rendering.

Visualization type: IDLVOLUME

Data Types Accepted

- Volume data: IDLARRAY3D
- Palette data: IDLPALETTE
- Opacity table data: IDLOPACITY_TABLE

Creating a New Visualization Type

An iTool visualization class definition file must (at the least) provide methods to initialize the visualization class, get and set property values, handle changes to the underlying data, clean up when the visualization is destroyed, and define the visualization class structure. Complex visualization types will likely provide additional methods.

The process of creating a visualization type is outlined in the following sections:

- [“Creating the Class Structure Definition”](#) on page 121
- [“Creating an Init Method”](#) on page 123
- [“Creating a Cleanup Method”](#) on page 130
- [“Creating a GetProperty Method”](#) on page 131
- [“Creating a SetProperty Method”](#) on page 132
- [“Creating an onDataChangeUpdate Method”](#) on page 133
- [“Creating an onDataDisconnect Method”](#) on page 134

Creating the Class Structure Definition

When any IDL object is created, IDL looks for an IDL class structure definition that specifies the instance data fields needed by an instance of the object, along with the data types of those fields. The object class structure must have been defined *before* any objects of the type are created. In practice, when the IDL OBJ_NEW function attempts to create an instance of a specified object class, it executes a procedure named *ObjectClass__define* (where *ObjectClass* is the name of the object), which is expected to define an IDL structure variable with the correct name and structure fields. For additional information on how IDL creates object instances, see [“The Object Lifecycle”](#) in Chapter 13 of the *Object Programming* manual.

Note

The class structure definition is generally the last routine in the `.pro` file that defines an object class.

Subclassing from the IDLitVisualization Class

The IDLitVisualization class serves as a container for visualization objects displayed in an iTool. The class includes methods to handle changes to data and property values automatically; in almost all cases, new visualization types will be subclassed from the

IDLitVisualization class. See “[IDLitVisualization](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details on the methods and properties available to classes that subclass from IDLitVisualization.

Example Class Structure Definition

The following is the class structure definition for the `ExampleVis` visualization class. This procedure should be the last procedure in a file named `examplevis__define.pro`.

```
PRO ExampleVis__Define

    struct = { ExampleVis,          $
              INHERITS IDLitVisualization, $
              _oPlot: OBJ_NEW(),      $
              _oSymbol: OBJ_NEW(),    $
              _exampleProperty: ''    $
            }

END
```

Discussion

The purpose of the structure definition routine is to define a named IDL structure with structure fields that will contain the visualization object instance data. The structure name should be the same as the visualization’s class name — in this case, `ExampleVis`.

Like many `iTool` visualizations, `ExampleVis` is created as a subclass of the `IDLitVisualization` class. Visualization classes that subclass from the `IDLitVisualization` class inherit all of the standard `iTool` visualization features, as described in “[Subclassing from the IDLitVisualization Class](#)” on page 121.

The `ExampleVis` visualization class instance data includes two graphics objects: an `IDLitVisPlot` object, to which a reference is stored in the `_oPlot` class structure field, and an `IDLitSymbol` object, to which a reference is stored in the `_oSymbol` class structure field. Both graphics objects are defined in the class structure definitions as object instances, denoted by the presence of the `OBJ_NEW()` after the structure field name. Finally, instance data for a string property named `ExampleProperty` is stored in the `_exampleProperty` class structure field.

Note

This example is intended to demonstrate how simple it can be to create a new visualization class definition. While the class definition for a visualization class

with significant extra functionality will likely define additional structure fields, and may inherit from other iTool classes, the basic principles are the same.

Creating an Init Method

The visualization class Init method handles any initialization required by the visualization object, and should do the following:

- define the Init function method, using the keyword inheritance mechanism to handle “extra” keywords
- call the Init methods of any superclasses, using the keyword inheritance mechanism to pass “extra” keywords
- register any data parameters used when creating visualizations of the new type
- register any properties of your visualization type, and set property attributes as necessary
- create all the graphics objects needed by the visualization, and add them to the visualization object
- define a custom selection visual, if desired
- perform other initialization steps as necessary
- return the value 1 if the initialization steps are successful, or 0 otherwise

Note

While the Init method *registers* data parameters for a visualization, it does not *accept* data parameters itself. Data parameters are set in the OnDataChangeUpdate method.

Definition of the Init Function

Begin by defining the argument and keyword list for your Init method. The argument and keyword list defines positional parameters (arguments) accepted by your method, defines any keywords that will be handled directly by your method, and specifies whether keywords not explicitly handled by your method will be passed through to other routines called by your method via IDL’s keyword inheritance mechanism. The Init method for a visualization type generally looks something like this:

```
FUNCTION MyVisualization::Init, MYKEYWORD1 = mykeyword1, $  
    MYKEYWORD2 = mykeyword2, ..., _REF_EXTRA = _extra
```

where *MyVisualization* is the name of your visualization class and the *MYKEYWORD* parameters are keywords handled explicitly by your Init function.

Always use keyword inheritance (the `_REF_EXTRA` keyword) to pass keyword parameters through to any called routines. See “[Keyword Inheritance](#)” in Chapter 5 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for details on IDL’s keyword inheritance mechanism.

Superclass Initialization

The visualization class Init method should call the Init method of any required superclass. For example, if your visualization class is based on an existing visualization, you would call that visualization’s Init method:

```
success = self->SomeVisualizationClass::Init(_EXTRA = _extra)
```

where *SomeVisualizationClass* is the class definition file for the visualization on which your new visualization is based. The variable `success` will contain a 1 if the initialization is successful.

Note

Your visualization class may have multiple superclasses. In general, each superclass’ Init method should be invoked by your class’ Init method.

Error Checking

Rather than simply calling the superclass Init method, it is a good idea to check whether the call to the superclass Init method succeeded. The following statement checks the value returned by the superclass Init method; if the returned value is 0 (indicating failure), the current Init method also immediately returns with a value of 0:

```
IF (self->SomeVisualizationClass::Init(_EXTRA = _extra) EQ 0) THEN
$
    RETURN, 0
```

This convention is used in all visualization classes included with IDL. RSI strongly suggests that you include similar checks in your own class definition files.

Keywords to the Init Method

Properties of the visualization type class can be set in the Init method by specifying the property names and values as IDL keyword-value pairs. In addition to any keywords implemented directly in the Init method of the superclass on which you base your class, the properties of the `IDLitVisualization` class are available to any

visualization class. See “[IDLitVisualization Properties](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual.

Note

Always use keyword inheritance (the `_EXTRA` keyword) to pass keyword parameters through to the superclass. See “[Keyword Inheritance](#)” in Chapter 5 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for details on IDL’s keyword inheritance mechanism.

Standard Base Class

While you can create your new visualization class from any existing visualization class, in many cases, visualization classes you create will be subclassed directly from the base class `IDLitVisualization`:

```
IF (self->IDLitVisualization::Init(_EXTRA = _extra) EQ 0) $
    THEN RETURN, 0
```

The `IDLitVisualization` class provides the base `iTool` functionality used in the visualization classes created by RSI. See “[Subclassing from the IDLitVisualization Class](#)” on page 121 for details.

Return Value

If all of the routines and methods used in the `Init` method execute successfully, the method should indicate successful initialization by returning 1. Other visualization classes that subclass from your visualization class may check this return value, as your routine should check the value returned by any superclass `Init` methods called.

Registering Parameters

Visualization types must register each data parameter used to create the visualization. Data parameters are described in detail in [Chapter 3, “Data Management”](#).

Register a parameter by calling the `RegisterParameter` method of the `IDLitParameter` class:

```
self->RegisterParameter, ParmameterName, $
    TYPES = ['DataType1', ..., 'DataTypeN']
```

where *ParameterName* is a string that defines the name of the parameter and the `TYPES` keyword is set equal to a string or array of strings specifying the `iTool` system data types the parameter can represent. See “[Registering Parameters](#)” on page 61 for additional details.

Registering Properties

Visualization types can register properties with the iTool. Registered properties show up in the property sheet interface, and can be modified interactively by users. The iTool property interface is described in detail in [Chapter 4, “Property Management”](#).

Register a property by calling the `RegisterProperty` method of the `IDLitComponent` class:

```
self->RegisterProperty, PropertyIdentifier [, TypeCode] $
    [, ATTRIBUTE = value]
```

where *PropertyIdentifier* is a string that uniquely identifies the property, *TypeCode* is an integer between 0 and 9 specifying the property data type, and *ATTRIBUTE* is a property attribute. See [“Registering Properties”](#) on page 74 for details.

Property Aggregation

IDL objects can *contain* other objects; a visualization type is, at one level, simply an object container that holds the different graphics objects that make up a visualization. The iTools *property aggregation* mechanism allows the properties of several different objects held by the same container object to be displayed in the same property sheet automatically. Without property aggregation, you would have to manually register all of the properties of the objects contained in your visualization type object.

Aggregate the properties of contained objects using the `Aggregate` method of the `IDLitVisualization` class:

```
self->Aggregate, Object_Reference
```

where *Object_Reference* is a reference to the object whose properties you want aggregated into the visualization object. See [“Property Aggregation”](#) on page 81 for additional details.

Note

The `IDLitVisualization::Add` method includes an `AGGREGATE` keyword. This keyword is simply a shorthand method of aggregating the properties of an object during the call to the `Add` method, eliminating the need to call the `Aggregate` method separately. The call

```
self->Add, Object_Reference, /AGGREGATE
```

is the same as the following two calls:

```
self->Add, Object_Reference
self->Aggregate, Object_Reference
```

Setting Property Attributes

If a property has already been registered, perhaps by a superclass of your visualization class, you can change the registered attribute values using the `SetPropertyAttribute` method of the `IDLitComponent` class:

```
self->SetPropertyAttribute, Identifier
```

where *Identifier* is the name of the keyword to the `GetProperty` and `SetProperty` methods used to retrieve or change the value of this property. (The *Identifier* is specified in the call to `RegisterProperty` either via the *PropertyName* argument or the `IDENTIFIER` keyword.) See “[Property Attributes](#)” on page 78 for additional details.

Adding Graphics Objects to the Visualization

An iTool visualization type must contain at least one `IDLit*` visualization object or `IDLgr*` graphics object. To add a visualization or graphics object, you must first create an instance of the object using the `OBJ_NEW` function, then add the object instance to the visualization using the `Add` method of the `IDLitVisualization` class:

```
Graphics_Object = OBJ_NEW('IDLitVisObject')
self->Add, Graphics_Object
```

where *IDLitVisObject* is an actual IDL iTool visualization class, such as `IDLitVisPlot`.

In practice, you should also consider the following when adding a visualization or graphics object to a visualization type:

- The visualization or graphics object reference should generally be placed in a specific field of the visualization type’s class structure. This allows you access to the object when you have the reference to the visualization object itself.
- In most cases, you will want to include the `REGISTER_PROPERTIES` keyword in the call to `OBJ_NEW` when creating a visualization or graphics object instance. This keyword does the work of registering all registrable properties of the object automatically, relieving you from the need to manually register the properties you want to show up in the visualization’s property sheet.
- Including the `PRIVATE` keyword in the call to `OBJ_NEW` indicates that the visualization or graphics object should not appear in the iTools visualization browser itself; users gain access to the object’s properties via the visualization to which the object is being added.

A typical addition of a graphics object to a visualization looks like this:

```
self._oPlot = OBJ_NEW('IDLitVisPlot', /REGISTER_PROPERTIES, $
```

```

        /PRIVATE)
    self->Add, self._oPlot, /AGGREGATE

```

Here, we create a new IDLitVisPlot object instance and place the object reference in the `_oPlot` field of the visualization’s class structure. The `REGISTER_PROPERTIES` keyword ensures that all of the registrable IDLitVisPlot properties are registered with the visualization automatically. Next, we use the `Add` method to add the object instance to our visualization; this inserts the object into the visualization’s graphics hierarchy. Finally, we use the `AGGREGATE` keyword to include all of the IDLitVisPlot object’s registered properties in the visualization’s property sheet.

Passing Through Caller-Supplied Property Settings

If you have included the `_REF_EXTRA` keyword in your function definition, you can use IDL’s keyword inheritance mechanism to pass any “extra” keyword values included in the call to the `Init` method through to other routines. One of the things this allows you to do is specify property settings when the `Init` method is called; simply include each property’s keyword/value pair when calling the `Init` method, and include the following in the body of the `Init` method:

```

    IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) GT 0) THEN $
        self->MyVisualization::SetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra

```

where *MyVisualization* is the name of your visualization class. This line has the effect of passing any “extra” keyword values to your visualization class’ `SetProperty` method, where the keyword can either be handled directly or passed through to the `SetProperty` methods of the superclasses of your class. See [“Creating a SetProperty Method”](#) on page 132 for details.

Example Init Method

The following example code shows a very simple `Init` method for a visualization type named `ExampleVis`. This function would be included (along with the class structure definition routine and any other methods defined by the class) in a file named `examplevis__define.pro`.

```

FUNCTION ExampleVis::Init, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

; Initialize the superclass.
IF (self->IDLitVisualization::Init(/REGISTER_PROPERTIES, $
    TYPE='ExampleVis', NAME='Example Visualization Type', $
    ICON='plot', /PRIVATE, _EXTRA = _extra) NE 1) THEN $
    RETURN, 0

; Register a parameter
self->RegisterParameter, 'Y', DESCRIPTION='Y Plot Data', $

```



```

        /INPUT, TYPES='IDLVECTOR', /OPTARGET

; Add a plotting symbol object and aggregate its properties
; into the visualization.
self._oSymbol = OBJ_NEW('IDLitSymbol', PARENT = self)
self->Aggregate, self._oSymbol

; Create an IDLitVisPlot object, setting its SYMBOL property to
; the symbol object we just created. Add the plot object to the
; visualization, and aggregate its properties.
self._oPlot = OBJ_NEW('IDLitVisPlot', /REGISTER_PROPERTIES, $
    SYMBOL = self._oSymbol->GetSymbol())
self->Add, self._oPlot, /AGGREGATE

; Register an example property that holds a string value.
self->RegisterProperty, 'ExampleProperty', $
    /STRING, DESCRIPTION='An example property', $
    NAME='Example Property', SENSITIVE = 1

; Pass any extra keyword parameters through to the SetProperty
; method.
IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) GT 0) THEN $
    self->ExampleVis::SetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra

; Return success
RETURN, 1

END

```

Discussion

The `ExampleVis` class is based on the `IDLitVisualization` class (discussed in [“Subclassing from the IDLitVisualization Class”](#) on page 121). As a result, all of the standard features of an `iTool` visualization class are already present. We don’t define any keyword values to be handled explicitly in the `Init` method, but we do use the keyword inheritance mechanism to pass keyword values through to methods called within the `Init` method. The `ExampleVis` `Init` method does the following things:

1. Calls the `Init` method of the superclass, `IDLitVisualization`. We use the `REGISTER_PROPERTIES` keyword to ensure that all registrable properties of the superclass are exposed in the `ExampleVis` object’s property sheet. We also set the visualization type to be an “`ExampleVis`,” provide a `Name` for the object instance, and provide an icon. Finally, we use the `_EXTRA` keyword inheritance mechanism to pass through any keywords provided when the `ExampleVis` `Init` method is called.
2. Registers an input parameter called `Y` that must be a vector. The `OPTARGET` keyword specifies that the `Y` parameter can be the target for `iTool` operations.

3. Creates a plotting symbol created from the `IDLitSymbol` class and aggregate its properties with the other `ExampleVis` properties.
4. Creates an `IDLitGrPlot` object that uses the `IDLitSymbol` object for its plotting symbols.
5. Registers an example property that holds a string value.
6. Passes any “extra” keyword properties through to the `SetProperty` method.
7. Returns the integer 1, indicating successful initialization.

Creating a Cleanup Method

The visualization class `Cleanup` method handles any cleanup required by the visualization object, and should do the following:

- destroy any objects created by the visualization that were not added to the graphics hierarchy with a call to the `Add` method
- call the superclass’ `Cleanup` method

Calling the superclass’ cleanup method will destroy any objects that were added to the graphics hierarchy.

See “[IDLitVisualization::Cleanup](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example Cleanup Method

The following example code shows a very simple `Cleanup` method for the `ExampleVis` visualization type:

```
PRO ExampleVis::Cleanup

    ; Clean up the IDLitSymbol object we created.
    OBJ_DESTROY, self._oSymbol

    ; Call superclass Cleanup method
    self->IDLitVisualization::Cleanup

END
```

Discussion

The `Cleanup` method first destroys the `IDLitSymbol` object, which is not part of the graphics hierarchy, then calls the superclass `Cleanup` method to destroy the objects in the graphics hierarchy.

Creating a GetProperty Method

The visualization class `GetProperty` method retrieves property values from the visualization object instance or from instance data of other associated objects. The method can retrieve the requested property value from the visualization object's instance data or by calling another class' `GetProperty` method.

Note

Any property registered with a call to the `RegisterProperty` method must be listed as a keyword to the `GetProperty` method either of the visualization class or one of its superclasses.

See “[IDLitVisualization::GetProperty](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example GetProperty Method

The following example code shows a very simple `GetProperty` method for the `ExampleVis` visualization type:

```
PRO ExampleVis::GetProperty, $
    EXAMPLEPROPERTY = exampleProperty, $
    _REF_EXTRA = _extra

    IF ARG_PRESENT(exampleProperty) THEN BEGIN
        exampleProperty = self._exampleproperty
    ENDIF

    ; get superclass properties
    IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) GT 0) THEN $
        self->IDLitVisualization::GetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra

END
```

Discussion

The `GetProperty` method first defines the keywords it will accept. There must be a keyword for each property of the visualization type. The keyword inheritance mechanism allows properties to be retrieved from the `ExampleVis` class' superclasses without knowing the names of the properties.

Using the `ARG_PRESENT` function, the method checks for the presence of keywords in the call to the `GetProperty` method. If a keyword is detected, it retrieves the value of the associated property from the object's instance data. In this example, only one property (`ExampleProperty`) is specific to the `ExampleVis` object.

Finally, the method calls the superclass' `GetProperty` method, passing in all of the keywords stored in the `_extra` structure.

Creating a SetProperty Method

The visualization class `SetProperty` method stores property values in the visualization object's instance data or in properties of associated objects. It sets the specified property value either by storing the value directly in the visualization object's instance data or by calling another class' `SetProperty` method.

Note

Any property registered with a call to the `RegisterProperty` method must be listed as a keyword to the `SetProperty` method either of the visualization class or one of its superclasses.

See “[IDLitVisualization::SetProperty](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example SetProperty Method

The following example code shows a very simple `SetProperty` method for the `ExampleVis` visualization type:

```
PRO ExampleVis::SetProperty, $
    EXAMPLEPROPERTY = exampleProperty, $
    _REF_EXTRA = _extra

    IF (N_ELEMENTS(exampleProperty) GT 0) THEN BEGIN
        self._exampleProperty = exampleProperty
    ENDIF

    IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) GT 0) THEN $
        self->IDLitVisualization::SetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra

END
```

Discussion

The `SetProperty` method first defines the keywords it will accept. There must be a keyword for each property of the visualization type. The keyword inheritance mechanism allows properties to be set on the `ExampleVis` class' superclasses without knowing the names of the properties.

Using the `N_ELEMENTS` function, we check to see whether a value was specified for each keyword. If a value is detected, we set the value of the associated property. In this example, only one property (`ExampleProperty`) is specific to the `ExampleVis`

object. We set the value of the `ExampleProperty` directly in the `ExampleVis` object's instance data.

Finally, we call the superclass' `SetProperty` method, passing in all of the keywords stored in the `_extra` structure.

Creating an `OnDataChangeUpdate` Method

The visualization class `OnDataChangeUpdate` method takes care of updating the visualization when one or more of the data parameters used to create the visualization change their values. The tasks this method must perform are dependent on the type of visualization involved and the data parameter that changes. The general idea is that when the value of a data object changes, the `OnDataChangeUpdate` method for each visualization that uses that data is called. The `OnDataChangeUpdate` method then uses the `GetData` method to retrieve the changed data from the `IDLitData` object, inspects the data and manipulates it as necessary, and uses the `SetProperty` method to insert the new data values into the visualization object.

See “[IDLitParameter::OnDataChangeUpdate](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual and “[Data Update Mechanism](#)” on page 65 for additional details.

Example `OnDataChangeUpdate` Method

The following example code shows a very simple `OnDataChangeUpdate` method for the `ExampleVis` visualization type:

```
PRO ExampleVis::OnDataChangeUpdate, oSubject, parmName

CASE STRUPCASE(parmName) OF

  '<PARAMETER SET>': BEGIN
    oParams = oSubject->Get(/ALL, COUNT = nParam, $
      NAME = paramNames)
    FOR i = 0, nParam-1 DO BEGIN
      IF (paramNames[i] EQ '') THEN CONTINUE
      oData = oSubject->GetByName(paramNames[i])
      IF (OBJ_VALID(oData)) THEN $
        self->OnDataChangeUpdate, oData, paramNames[i]
    ENDFOR
  END
END
'Y': BEGIN
  success = oSubject->GetData(data)
  nData = N_ELEMENTS(data)
  IF (nData GT 0) THEN BEGIN
    ; Set the min/max values.
    minn = MIN(data, MAX = maxx)
    self._oPlot->SetProperty, DATAY = TEMPORARY(data), $
```

```

        MIN_VALUE = minn, MAX_VALUE = maxx
    ENDIF
END
ELSE: self->ErrorMessage, 'Unknown parameter'
ENDCASE

END

```

Discussion

The `OnDataChangeUpdate` method must accept two arguments: an object reference to the data object whose data has changed (`oSubject` in the previous example), and a string containing the name of the parameter associated with the data object (`parmName` in the example).

Note

The string `<PARAMETER SET>` is a special case value for the second argument, used to indicate that the object reference is not a single data object but a parameter set. Calling `OnDataChangeUpdate` with a parameter set rather than a data item provides a simple way to update a group of data values with a single statement; this can be very useful when creating the visualization for the first time.

We use a CASE statement to determine which parameter has been modified, and process the data as appropriate. We first handle the special case where the parameter has the value `<PARAMETER SET>` by looping through all of the parameters in the parameter set object, calling the `OnDataChangeUpdate` method again on each parameter.

Next, we handle the parameter (γ) by calling the `IDLitData::GetData` method on the data object reference stored in the `oSubject` argument. We use the `N_ELEMENTS` function to determine whether any data was returned. If data was returned, we determine the minimum and maximum values. Finally, we use the `SetProperty` method to insert the changed data (using the `TEMPORARY` function to avoid making a copy of the data) into the `DATAY` property of the `IDLitVisPlot` object stored in the visualization's `_oPlot` class structure field. Similarly, we insert the new minimum and maximum values into the `MIN_VALUE` and `MAX_VALUE` properties of the `IDLitVisPlot` object.

Creating an OnDataDisconnect Method

The visualization class `OnDataDisconnect` method is called automatically when a data value has been disconnected from a parameter. A visualization class based on the `IDLitVisualization` class *must* implement this method in order for changes or additions to the data parameters to be updated automatically in the resulting

visualizations. The general idea is that when a data item is disassociated from a visualization parameter, one or more properties of the visualization may need to be reset to reasonable default values. For example, in the case of a plot visualization, if the plotted data is disconnected, we want to reset the data ranges to their default values and hide the plot visualization.

See “[IDLitParameter::OnDataDisconnect](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example OnDataDisconnect Method

```
PRO ExampleVis::OnDataDisconnect, ParmName

CASE ParmName OF
  'Y': BEGIN
    self._oPlot->SetProperty, DATAX = [0,1], DATAY = [0,1]
    self._oPlot->SetProperty, /HIDE
  END

  ELSE:
  ENDCASE

END
```

Discussion

The `OnDataDisconnect` method takes a single argument, which contains the uppercase name of the parameter that was disconnected. In the case of our `ExampleVis` visualization, we only need to handle the `Y` parameter. If the `Y` parameter is disconnected, we set the data ranges of the plot object to their default values (the range between 0 and 1), and hide the plot visualization using the `HIDE` property.

Registering a Visualization Type

Before a visualization of a given type can be created by an iTool, the visualization type's class definition must be registered as being available to the iTool. Registering a visualization type with the iTool links the class definition file containing the actual IDL code that defines the visualization type with a simple string that names the type. Code that creates a visualization in an iTool uses the name string to specify which type of visualization should be created. In addition, some operations and manipulators will operate only on specific visualization types; these limits are also specified using the name string.

Using IDLitool::RegisterVisualization

In most cases, you will register a visualization type with the iTool in the iTool's class Init method. Registration ensures that the visualization type is available when the iTool attempts to create a visualization. (See [“Creating a New iTool Class”](#) on page 91 for details on the iTool class Init method.)

To register a visualization, call the IDLitool::RegisterVisualization method:

```
self->RegisterVisualization, Visualization_Type, $
    VisType_Class_Name
```

where *Visualization_Type* is the string you will use when referring to the visualization type, and *VisType_Class_Name* is a string that specifies the name of the class file that contains the visualization type's definition.

Note

The file *VisType_Class_Name__define.pro* must exist somewhere in IDL's path for the visualization type to be successfully registered.

See [“IDLitool::RegisterVisualization”](#) in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

Specifying Useful Properties

You can set any property of the [IDLitVisualization](#) and [IDLitComponent](#) classes when registering a visualization. The following properties may be of particular interest:

ICON

A string value giving the name of an icon to be associated with this object. Typically, this property is the name of a bitmap file to be used when displaying the object in a tree view. See [“Icon Bitmaps”](#) on page 44 for details on where bitmap icon files are located.

TYPE

A string or an array of strings indicating the types of data that can be displayed by the visualization. iTools data types are described in [Chapter 3, “Data Management”](#). Set this property to a null string (' ') to specify that all types of data can be displayed.

Unregistering a Visualization Type

If you are creating a new `iTool` from an existing `iTool` class, you may want to remove a visualization type registered with the existing class from your new tool. This can be useful if you have an `iTool` class that implements all of the functionality you need, but which registers a visualization type you don't want included in your `iTool`. Rather than recreating the `iTool` class to remove the visualization type, you could create your new `iTool` class in such a way that it inherits from the existing `iTool` class, but *unregisters* the unwanted visualization.

Unregister a visualization type by calling the `IDLitTool::UnregisterVisualization` method in the `Init` method of your `iTool` class:

```
self->UnregisterVisualization, identifier
```

where *identifier* is the string name used when registering the visualization.

For example, suppose you are creating a new `iTool` that subclasses from the standard `iSurface` tool, which is defined by the `IDLitToolSurface` class. If you wanted your new tool to behave just like the `iSurface` tool, with the exception that it would not handle 2D plot visualizations, you could include the following method call in your `iTool`'s `Init` method:

```
self->UnregisterVisualization, 'Plot'
```

Finding the Identifier String

To find the string used as the *identifier* parameter to the `UnregisterVisualization` method, you can inspect the class file that registers the visualization (if the visualization is registered by a user-created class), or use the `FindIdentifiers` method of the `IDLitTool` object to generate a list of registered visualizations. (Standard `iTool` visualization types are pre-registered within the `iTool` framework.)

If the visualization is registered in a user-created class, you could inspect the class definition file to find a call to the `RegisterVisualization` method, which looks something like this:

```
self->RegisterVisualization, 'Plot', 'IDLitVisPlot', $
    ICON = 'plot'
```

The first argument to the `RegisterVisualization` method (`'Plot'`) is the string name of the visualization type.

Alternatively, to generate a list of relative identifiers for all visualizations registered with the current tool, use the following statements:

```
void = ITGETCURRENT(TOOL=oTool)
```

```
vislist = oTool->FindIdentifiers('*/visualizations/*')
FOR i = 0, N_ELEMENTS(vislist)-1 DO PRINT, $
    STRMID(vislist[i], STRPOS(vislist[i], '/') / REVERSE_SEARCH)+1)
```

See “[IDLitTool::FindIdentifiers](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

Example: Image-Contour Visualization

This example creates a visualization type named `example1_visImageContour` that displays an image and overlays it with a contour based on the image data.

Example Code

The code for this example visualization type is included in the file `example1_visimagecontour__define.pro` in the `examples/doc/itools` subdirectory of the IDL distribution. Enter

```
example1tool
```

at the IDL prompt to create an instance of an `iTool` that registers this visualization type as its default visualization. Open the file in any text editor or enter

```
.edit example1_visimagecontour__define
```

at the IDLDE prompt to open the `.pro` file in the IDL editor.

Class Definition File

The class definition for `example1_visImageContour` consists of an `Init` method, an `OnDataChangeUpdate` method, and a class structure definition routine. Other important methods — `Cleanup`, `GetProperty`, and `SetProperty` — are handled by the superclass (`IDLitVisualization`).

As with all object class definition files, the class structure definition routine is the last routine in the file, and the file is given the same name as the class definition routine (with the suffix `.pro` appended).

Class Definition

```
PRO example1_visImageContour__define
  struct = { example1_visImageContour, $
    inherits IDLitVisualization, $
    _oContour: OBJ_NEW(), $
    _oImage: OBJ_NEW() $
  }
END
```

Discussion

Our class definition routine creates an IDL structure variable with the name `example1_visImageContour`, specifying that the structure inherits from the `IDLitVisualization` class. The structure has two instance data fields named `_oContour` and `_oImage`, which will contain object references to the `IDLitVisImage` and `IDLitVisContour` objects that make up the `example1_visImageContour` visualization.

Init Method

The `Init` method is called when the `example1_visImageContour` visualization is created.

```
FUNCTION example1_visImageContour::Init, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

; Initialize the superclass
IF (~self->IDLitVisualization::Init($
    NAME='example1_visImageContour', $
    ICON = 'image', _EXTRA = _extra)) THEN RETURN, 0

; Register the parameters we are using for data
self->RegisterParameter, 'IMAGEPIXELS', $
    DESCRIPTION = 'Image Data', /INPUT, $
    TYPES = ['IDLIMAGEPIXELS', 'IDLARRAY2D'], /OPTARGET
self->RegisterParameter, 'PALETTE', $
    DESCRIPTION = 'Palette', /INPUT, /OPTIONAL, $
    TYPES = ['IDLPALETTE', 'IDLARRAY2D'], /OPTARGET

; Create objects and add to this Visualization
self._oImage = OBJ_NEW('IDLitVisImage', /PRIVATE)
self->Add, self._oImage, /AGGREGATE
self._oContour = OBJ_NEW('IDLitVisContour', /PRIVATE)
self->Add, self._oContour, /AGGREGATE

; Return success
RETURN, 1

END
```

Discussion

The first item in our class definition file is the `Init` method. The `Init` method's function signature is defined first, using the class name `example1_visImageContour`. Note the use of the `_REF_EXTRA` keyword inheritance mechanism; this allows any keywords specified in a call to the `Init` method to be passed through to routines that are called within the `Init` method even if we do not know the names of those keywords in advance.

First, we call the `Init` method of the superclass. In this case, we are creating a subclass of the `IDLitVisualization` class; this provides us with all of the standard `iTool` visualization methods automatically. Any “extra” keywords specified in the call to our `Init` method are passed to the `IDLitVisualization::Init` method via the keyword inheritance mechanism. If the call to the superclass `Init` method fails, we return immediately with a value of 0.

We register two parameters used by our visualization: `IMAGEPIXELS` and `PALETTE`. Both parameters are input parameters (meaning they are used to create the visualization), and both can be the target of an operation. The `IMAGEPIXELS` parameter can contain data of two `iTool` data types: `IDLIMAGEPIXELS` or `IDLARRAY2D`. When data are assigned to the visualization’s parameter set, only data that matches one of these two types can be assigned to the `IMAGEPIXELS` parameter. Similarly, the `PALETTE` parameter can contain data of type `IDLPALETTE` or `IDLARRAY2D`.

Next, we create the two visualization components that make up the `example1_visImageContour` visualization type: an `IDLitVisImage` object and an `IDLitVisContour` object. Each object is created by a call to the `OBJ_NEW` function; the newly-created object reference is placed in a field of the `example1_visImageContour` object’s instance data structure. We set the `PRIVATE` property to prevent the `IDLitVisImage` and `IDLitVisContour` objects from showing up in the visualization browser as separate items. The new visualization objects are then added to the `example1_visImageContour` object using the `Add` method; the `AGGREGATE` keyword specifies that the properties of each of the component visualization objects will be displayed as properties of the `example1_visImageContour` object itself.

Finally, we return 1, indicating a successful initialization.

OnChangeUpdate Method

The `OnChangeUpdate` method is called whenever the data associated with the `example1_visImageContour` visualization object changes. This may include the initial creation of the visualization, if data parameters are specified in the call to the `iTool` launch routine that creates the visualization.

```
PRO example1_visImageContour::OnChangeUpdate, oSubject, $
    parmName,      _REF_EXTRA = _extra

    ; Branch based on the value of the parmName string.
    CASE STRUPCASE(parmName) OF

        ; The method was called with a paramter set as the argument.
        '<PARAMETER SET>': BEGIN
```

```

oParams = oSubject->Get(/ALL, COUNT = nParam, $
    NAME = paramNames)
FOR i = 0, nParam-1 DO BEGIN
    IF (paramNames[i] EQ '') THEN CONTINUE
    oData = oSubject->GetByName(paramNames[i])
    IF (OBJ_VALID(oData)) THEN $
        self->OnDataChangeUpdate, oData, paramNames[i]
    ENDFOR
END

; The method was called with an image array as the argument.
'IMAGEPIXELS': BEGIN
void = self._oImage->SetData(oSubject, $
    PARAMETER_NAME = 'IMAGEPIXELS')
void = self._oContour->SetData(oSubject, $
    PARAMETER_NAME = 'Z')
; Make our contour appear at the top of the surface.
IF (oSubject->GetData(zdata)) THEN $
    self._oContour->SetProperty, ZVALUE = MAX(zdata)
END

; The method was called with a palette as the argument.
'PALETTE': BEGIN
void = self._oImage->SetData(oSubject, $
    PARAMETER_NAME = 'PALETTE')
void = self._oContour->SetData(oSubject, $
    PARAMETER_NAME = 'PALETTE')
END

ELSE: ; DO nothing

ENDCASE

END

```

Discussion

The `OnDataChangeUpdate` method accepts the two required arguments: an object reference to the data object whose data has changed (`oSubject`), and a string containing the name of the parameter associated with the data object (`parmName`).

We use a `CASE` statement to determine which parameter has been modified, and process the data as appropriate. We first handle the special case where the parameter has the value `<PARAMETER SET>` by looping through all of the parameters in the parameter set object, calling the `OnDataChangeUpdate` method again on each parameter.

We handle the `IMAGEPIXELS` parameter by calling the `IDLitParameter::SetData` method once on each of the two component visualizations, specifying that the input data object `oSubject` corresponds to the `IMAGEPIXELS` parameter of the `IDLitVisImage` object, and to the `Z` parameter of the `IDLitVisContour` object. We also set the `Z` value of the `IDLitVisContour` object using the maximum data value of the data contained in `oSubject`.

Finally, we handle the `PALETTE` parameter by calling the `SetData` method again, this time to set the `PALETTE` parameters of both the `IDLitVisImage` and `IDLitVisContour` objects.

OnDataDisconnect Method

The `OnDataDisconnect` method is called automatically when a data value has been disconnected from a parameter.

```
PRO example1_visImageContour::OnDataDisconnect, ParmName

CASE STRUPCASE(parmname) OF

    'IMAGEPIXELS': BEGIN
        self->SetProperty, DATA = 0
        self._oImage->SetProperty, /HIDE
        self._oContour->SetProperty, /HIDE
    END

    'PALETTE': BEGIN
        self._oImage->SetProperty, PALETTE = OBJ_NEW()
        self->SetPropertyAttribute, 'PALETTE', SENSITIVE = 0
    END

    ELSE: ; DO nothing
ENDCASE

END
```

Discussion

The `OnDataDisconnect` method takes a single argument, which contains the name of the parameter that was disconnected. In the case of our `example1_visImageContour` visualization, we handle the `IMAGEPIXELS` and `PALETTE` parameters. For the `IMAGEPIXELS` parameter, we set the `DATA` property of the parameter to 0, and hide both the image and the contour visualizations. For the `PALETTE` parameter, we set the `PALETTE` property of the image to a null object, and desensitize the property in the property sheet display.



Chapter 7

Creating an Operation

This chapter describes the process of creating an iTool operation.

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| Operations and the Undo/Redo System | 150 | Unregistering an Operation | 184 |
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Overview of Creating an iTool Operation

An *operation* is an iTool component object class that can be used to modify selected data, change the way a visualization is displayed in the iTool window, or otherwise affect the state of the iTool. Some examples of iTool operations are:

- performing the IDL SMOOTH operation on selected data,
- rotating a selected visualization by a specified angle,
- displaying data statistics.

A number of standard operations are predefined and included in the IDL iTools package; if none of the predefined operations suits your needs, you can create your own operation by subclassing either from the base `IDLitOperation` class on which all of the predefined operations are based, from the `IDLitDataOperation` class, or from one of the predefined operations.

The Operation Creation Process

To create a new iTool operation, you will do the following:

- Choose an iTool operation class on which your new operation will be based. In most cases, the operation will act on the data underlying a visualization; in these cases, you will base your new operation on the `IDLitDataOperation` class. If your operation will affect something other than data — the appearance of visualizations in the iTool window, or the value of some property — you will base your new class on the `IDLitOperation` class. Both classes provide support for the iTool undo/redo system, but operations that do not deal directly with data require additional code to properly allow for undoing and redoing the operations.
- Define the properties of the operation, and set default property values.
- If the new operation acts directly on data (that is, if it is based on the `IDLitDataOperation` class), provide an `Execute` method that performs the operation using the current property values. Similarly, if the new operation is more general and is based on the `IDLitOperation` class, provide a `DoAction` method.
- Optionally provide a `DoExecuteUI` method to display a user interface for operations that act directly on data.
- For generalized operations, provide `UndoOperation` and `RedoOperation` methods to undo and redo the operation. These methods may in turn require

that you provide methods to store values before and after the operation is executed.

- Override methods used to get or set properties, react to changes in the underlying data, and clean up, as necessary.

[This chapter](#) describes the process of creating new operations based on the `IDLitDataOperation` and `IDLitOperation` classes.

Predefined iTool Operations

The iTool system distributed with IDL includes a number of predefined operations. You can include these operations in an iTool directly by registering the class with your iTool (as described in [“Registering an Operation”](#) on page 182). You can also create a new operation class based on one of the predefined classes.

IDLitOpBytscl

Scales the values contained in a two-dimensional array into the range of 0-255

Data Types Accepted

- IDLARRAY2D

IDLitOpConvolution

Displays a dialog that allows the user to choose convolution settings, then calls the CONVOL function on the selected data using the specified parameters.

Data Types Accepted

- IDLVECTOR, IDLARRAY2D, IDLIMAGE

IDLitOpCurvefitting

Displays a dialog that allows the user to select a curve-fitting algorithm, then calls the appropriate IDL routine to perform the fit. The fitted curve is then created and inserted into the visualization as a new plot line.

Data Types Accepted

- IDLVECTOR

IDLitOpSmooth

Calls the SMOOTH function on the selected data. The smoothing window parameter can be set by the user via the property sheet interface of the Operations browser.

Data Types Accepted

- IDLVECTOR, IDLARRAY2D

Note

There are many additional operations (named with the prefix “idltop”) in the `lib\itools\components` subdirectory of your IDL installation.

Operations and the Undo/Redo System

The iTools system provides users with the ability to interactively undo and redo actions performed on visualizations or data items. As an iTool developer, you will need to provide some code to support the undo/redo feature; the amount of code required depends largely on the type of operation your operation class performs. The main dividing line is between data-centric operations that act directly on the data that underlies a visualization, and operations that act in a more generalized way, changing some value that may not be directly related to a data item. In most cases, operations that act directly on data are based on the `IDLitDataOperation` class, whereas operations that are more generalized are based on the `IDLitOperation` class.

Data-Centric Operations

Undo/redo functionality is handled automatically for data-centric operations based on the `IDLitDataOperation` class. The following things happen when the user requests an operation:

- For each selected item, data that matches the type supported by the operation is extracted and passed to the operation's `Execute` method. The `Execute` method modifies the data *in place*. When the data changes, all visualizations that observe the data item are notified, and update accordingly.
- If the user undoes the operation, the original data values are restored. By default, the original values are cached before the `Execute` method is called, and undoing the operation simply retrieves the data values from the cache. If the `REVERSIBLE_OPERATION` property of the `IDLitDataOperation` object is set, however, the original values are not cached, and the `UndoExecute` method is called when the user undoes the operation. The `UndoExecute` method must exist and must reverse the action performed by the `Execute` method, restoring the data items to their original values. Using the `REVERSIBLE_OPERATION` property allows you to avoid caching the data set (which may be large) when the operation performed on the data is easily reversed by computation.
- If the user redoes the operation, the data values computed by the `Execute` method are restored. By default, the `Execute` method is simply called again. If the `EXPENSIVE_COMPUTATION` property of the `IDLitDataOperation` object is set, however, the computed values are cached after the `Execute` method is called, and redoing the operation simply restores the cached data values. Using the `EXPENSIVE_COMPUTATION` property allows you to avoid having to recompute a computationally-intensive operation each time the user undoes and then redoes the operation.

Generalized Operations

To provide undo/redo functionality, generalized operations (those based on the `IDLitOperation` class) must provide methods that record the initial and final values of the item being modified, along with methods that use the recorded values to undo or redo the operation. The following things happen when the user requests an operation:

- The `DoAction` method creates an `IDLitCommandSet` object to hold the initial and final values.
- The `RecordInitialValues` method records the original values of the specified target objects. Values are stored as data items in `IDLitCommand` objects, which are in turn stored in the `IDLitCommandSet` object.
- The `RecordFinalValues` method retrieves the `IDLitCommand` objects created by the `RecordInitialValues` method from the `IDLitCommandSet` object, and records the new values of the target objects as additional items in those `IDLitCommand` objects.
- If the user undoes the operation, the `UndoOperation` method retrieves the `IDLitCommand` objects from the `IDLitCommandSet` object, selects the relevant data items from each, and restores the values.
- If the user redoes the operation, the `RedoOperation` method retrieves the `IDLitCommand` objects from the `IDLitCommandSet` object, selects the relevant data items from each, and restores the values.

Creating a New Data-Centric Operation

iTool operations that act primarily on data are based on the `IDLitDataOperation` class. The class definition file for an `IDLitDataOperation` object must (at the least) provide methods to initialize the operation class, get and set property values, execute the operation, and define the operation class structure. Complex operations will likely provide additional methods.

How an `IDLitDataOperation` Works

When an `IDLitDataOperation` is requested by a user, the following things occur:

1. As with any operation, execution commences when the `DoAction` method is called. When called, the `IDLitDataOperation` retrieves the currently-selected items. If nothing is selected, the operation returns.
2. For each selected item, the data objects of the parameters registered as “operation targets” are retrieved.
3. The data objects are queried for iTool data types that match the types supported by the `IDLitDataOperation`.

For each data object that includes data of an iTool data type supported by the `IDLitDataOperation`, the following things occur:

1. The data from the data object is retrieved.
2. If the `IDLitDataOperation` does not have the `REVERSIBLE_OPERATION` property set, a copy of the data is created and placed into the undo-redo command set.
3. The `Execute` method is called, with the retrieved data as its argument.
4. If the `Execute` method succeeds and the `IDLitDataOperation` has the `EXPENSIVE_COMPUTATION` property set, a copy of the results is placed into the undo-redo command set.
5. The result of the `IDLitDataOperation` is placed in the data object. This action will cause all visualization items that use the data object to update when the operation is completed.

Once all selected data items have been processed, the undo-redo command set is placed into the system undo-redo buffer for later use.

Creating an IDLitDataOperation

The process of creating an IDLitDataOperation is outlined in the following sections:

- [“Creating the Class Structure Definition”](#) on page 153
- [“Creating an Init Method”](#) on page 154
- [“Creating a Cleanup Method”](#) on page 158
- [“Creating an Execute Method”](#) on page 159
- [“Creating a DoExecuteUI Method”](#) on page 160
- [“Creating a GetProperty Method”](#) on page 161
- [“Creating a SetProperty Method”](#) on page 163
- [“Creating an UndoExecute Method”](#) on page 164

Creating the Class Structure Definition

When any IDL object is created, IDL looks for an IDL class structure definition that specifies the instance data fields needed by an instance of the object, along with the data types of those fields. The object class structure must be defined *before* any objects of the type are created. In practice, when the IDL OBJ_NEW function attempts to create an instance of a specified object class, it executes a procedure named *ObjectClass__define* (where *ObjectClass* is the name of the object), which is expected to define an IDL structure variable with the correct name and structure fields. For additional information on how IDL creates object instances, see [“The Object Lifecycle”](#) in Chapter 13 of the *Object Programming* manual.

Note

The class structure definition is generally the last routine in the `.pro` file that defines an object class.

Subclassing from the IDLitDataOperation Class

The IDLitDataOperation class simplifies the creation of operations that act only on data (as opposed to acting on the visual representation of that data) by providing methods that automate much of the process of execution and storing undo/redo data. If your operation class modifies data, you will almost certainly subclass from IDLitDataOperation, or from another operation that subclasses from IDLitDataOperation. See [“IDLitDataOperation”](#) in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual

for details on the methods and properties available to classes that subclass from `IDLitDataOperation`.

Example Class Structure Definition

The following is the class structure definition for the `ExampleDataOp` operation class. This procedure should be the last procedure in a file named `exampledataop__define.pro`.

```
PRO ExampleDataOp__Define

    struct = { ExampleDataOp,      $
               INHERITS IDLitDataOperation, $
               _byteTop: 0B      $
            }

END
```

Discussion

The purpose of the structure definition routine is to define a named IDL structure with structure fields that will contain the operation object instance data. The structure name should be the same as the operation's class name — in this case, `ExampleDataOp`.

Like many `iTool` operations that act on data, `ExampleDataOp` is created as a subclass of the `IDLitDataOperation` class. Operation classes that subclass from `IDLitDataOperation` class inherit methods and properties that make it easy to perform operations that affect data in an `iTool`.

The `ExampleDataOp` Operation class instance data includes a single property; a byte value that is stored in the `_byteTop` class structure field.

Note

This example is intended to demonstrate how simple it can be to create a new operation class definition. While the class definition for an operation class with significant extra functionality will likely define additional structure fields, and may inherit from other `iTool` classes, the basic principles are the same.

Creating an Init Method

The operation class `Init` method handles any initialization required by the operation object, and should do the following:

- define the `Init` function method, using the keyword inheritance mechanism to handle “extra” keywords

- call the Init methods of any superclasses, using the keyword inheritance mechanism to pass “extra” keywords
- register any properties of the operation, and set property attributes as necessary
- perform other initialization steps as necessary
- return the value 1 if the initialization steps are successful, or 0 otherwise

Definition of the Init Function

Begin by defining the argument and keyword list for your Init method. The argument and keyword list defines positional parameters (arguments) accepted by your method, defines any keywords that will be handled directly by your method, and specifies whether keywords not explicitly handled by your method will be passed through to other routines called by your method via IDL’s keyword inheritance mechanism.

Note

Because iTool operations are invoked by the user’s interactive choice of an item from a menu, they generally do not accept any keywords of their own.

The function signature of an Init method for an operation generally looks something like this:

```
FUNCTION MyOperation::Init, _REF_EXTRA = _extra
```

where *MyOperation* is the name of your operation class.

Note

Always use keyword inheritance (the `_REF_EXTRA` keyword) to pass keyword parameters through to any called routines. (See “[Keyword Inheritance](#)” in Chapter 5 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for details on IDL’s keyword inheritance mechanism.)

Superclass Initialization

The operation class Init method should call the Init method of any required superclass. For example, if your operation class is based on an existing operation, you would call that operation’s Init method:

```
success = self->SomeOperationClass::Init(_EXTRA = _extra)
```

where *SomeOperationClass* is the class definition file for the operation on which your new operation is based. The variable `success` contains a 1 if the initialization was successful.

Note

Your operation class may have multiple superclasses. In general, each superclass' Init method should be invoked by your class' Init method.

Error Checking

Rather than simply calling the superclass Init method, it is a good idea to check whether the call to the superclass Init method succeeded. The following statement checks the value returned by the superclass Init method; if the returned value is 0 (indicating failure), the current Init method also immediately returns with a value of 0:

```
IF ( self->SomeOperationClass::Init(_EXTRA = _extra) EQ 0 ) THEN $
    RETURN, 0
```

This convention is used in all operation classes included with IDL. RSI strongly suggests that you include similar checks in your own class definition files.

Keywords to the Init Method

Properties of the operation class can be set in the Init method by specifying the property names and values as IDL keyword-value pairs. In addition to any keywords implemented directly in the Init method of the superclass on which you base your class, the properties of the IDLitOperation class and the IDLitComponent class are available to any operation class. See “[IDLitOperation Properties](#)” and “[IDLitComponent Properties](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual.

Note

Always use keyword inheritance (the `_EXTRA` keyword) to pass keyword parameters through to the superclass. (See “[Keyword Inheritance](#)” in Chapter 5 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for details on IDL's keyword inheritance mechanism.)

Standard Base Class

While you can create your new operation class from any existing operation class, in many cases, data-centric operation classes you create will be subclassed directly from the base class IDLitDataOperation:

```
IF (self->IDLitDataOperation::Init(_EXTRA = _extra) EQ 0) $
    THEN RETURN, 0
```

The IDLitDataOperation class provides the base iTool functionality used in the data-centric operation classes created by RSI. See “[Subclassing from the IDLitDataOperation Class](#)” on page 153 for details.

Return Value

If all of the routines and methods used in the `Init` method execute successfully, it should indicate successful initialization by returning 1. Other operation classes that subclass from your operation class may check this return value, as your routine should check the value returned by any superclass `Init` methods called.

Registering Properties

Operations can register properties with the `iTool`. Registered properties show up in the property sheet interface, and can be modified interactively by users. The `iTool` property interface is described in detail in [Chapter 4, “Property Management”](#).

Register a property by calling the `RegisterProperty` method of the `IDLitComponent` class:

```
self->RegisterProperty, PropertyIdentifier [, TypeCode] $
    [, ATTRIBUTE = value]
```

where *PropertyIdentifier* is a string that uniquely identifies the property, *TypeCode* is an integer between 0 and 9 specifying the property data type, and *ATTRIBUTE* is a property attribute. See [“Registering Properties”](#) on page 74 for details.

Setting Property Attributes

If a property has already been registered, perhaps by a superclass of your operation class, you can change the registered attribute values using the `SetPropertyAttribute` method of the `IDLitComponent` class:

```
self->SetPropertyAttribute, Identifier
```

where *Identifier* is the name of the keyword to the `GetProperty` and `SetProperty` methods used to retrieve or change the value of this property. (The *Identifier* is specified in the call to `RegisterProperty` either via the *PropertyName* argument or the `IDENTIFIER` keyword.) See [“Property Attributes”](#) on page 78 for additional details.

Example Init Method

The following example code shows a very simple `Init` method for an operation named `ExampleDataOp`. This function would be included (along with the class structure definition routine and any other methods defined by the class) in a file named `exampledataop__define.pro`.

```
FUNCTION ExampleDataOp::Init, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

; Initialize the superclass.
IF (self->IDLitDataOperation::Init(TYPES=['IDLIMAGE'], $
```

```

        NAME='Example Data Operation', ICON='sum', $
        _EXTRA = _extra) NE 1) THEN $
            RETURN, 0

; Register a property that holds a byte value.
self->RegisterProperty, 'ByteTop', $
    DESCRIPTION='An example property', $
    NAME='Byte Threshold', SENSITIVE = 1

; Unhide the SHOW_EXECUTION_UI property.
self->SetPropertyAttribute, 'SHOW_EXECUTION_UI', HIDE=0

; Return success
RETURN, 1

END

```

Discussion

The `ExampleDataOp` class is based on the `IDLitDataOperation` class (discussed in [“Subclassing from the IDLitDataOperation Class”](#) on page 153). As a result, all of the standard features of an `iTool` data operation are already present. We don’t define any keyword values to be handled explicitly in the `Init` method, but we do use the keyword inheritance mechanism to pass keyword values through to methods called within the `Init` method. The `ExampleDataOp` `Init` method does the following things:

1. Calls the `Init` method of the superclass, `IDLitDataOperation`. We use the `TYPES` keyword to specify that our operation works on data that has the `iTool` data type `'IDLIMAGE'`, provide a name for the object instance, and provide an icon. Finally, we use the `_EXTRA` keyword inheritance mechanism to pass through any keywords provided when the `ExampleDataOp` `Init` method is called.
2. Registers a property that holds a byte value.
3. Returns the integer 1, indicating successful initialization.

Creating a Cleanup Method

The operation class `Cleanup` method handles any cleanup required by the operation object, and should do the following:

- destroy any pointers or objects created by the operation
- call the superclass’ `Cleanup` method

Calling the superclass’ `cleanup` method will destroy any objects created when the superclass was initialized.

Note

If your operation class is based on the `IDLitDataOperation` class, and does not create any pointers or objects of its own, the `Cleanup` method is not strictly required. It is always safest, however, to create a `Cleanup` method that calls the superclass' `Cleanup` method.

See “`IDLitDataOperation::Cleanup`” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example Cleanup Method

The following example code shows a very simple `Cleanup` method for the `ExampleDataOp` operation:

```
PRO ExampleDataOp::Cleanup

    ; Clean up superclass
    self->IDLitDataOperation::Cleanup

END
```

Discussion

Since our operation's instance data does not include any pointers or object references, the `Cleanup` method simply calls the superclass `Cleanup` method.

Creating an Execute Method

The operation class `Execute` method does the computational work of a data-centric operation; it is called automatically when the *iTool* user requests an operation based on the `IDLitDataOperation` class. The `Execute` method must accept a single argument that contains the *raw data* associated with an item selected by the user.

The fact that the raw data is passed to the `execute` method means that the `Execute` method itself does not need to “unpack” a data object before performing the operations, allowing rapid and simple operation execution. For example, if the operation expects data of the *iTools* data type `IDLARRAY2D`, the *iTool* system will include the selected two-dimensional array as the *Data* argument.

The actual processing performed by the `Execute` method depends entirely on the operation.

Example Execute Method

The following example code shows a simple Execute method for the `ExampleDataOp` operation, which will invert the values of the supplied data. Since our `ExampleDataOp` operation works on image data, this means the operation has the effect of producing the negative image.

```
FUNCTION ExampleDataOp::Execute, data

    ; If byte data then offsets are 0 and 255, otherwise
    ; use data minimum and maximum.
    offsetMax = (SIZE(data, /TYPE) eq 1) ? 255b : MAX(data)
    offsetMin = (SIZE(data, /TYPE) eq 1) ? 0b : MIN(data)
    data = offsetMax - TEMPORARY(data) + offsetMin
    RETURN, 1

END
```

Discussion

When our `ExampleDataOp` operation is invoked by a user, the `iTool` system automatically checks to see which items are selected in the visualization window. For each selection, the `iTool` system extracts any data of type `IDLIMAGE` and passes that data to the `Execute` method as an `IDL` array. Our `Execute` method then finds the minimum and maximum values, and inverts the data values.

Creating a DoExecuteUI Method

Suppose we want to collect some information from the user before executing our operation. If the operation class sets the `SHOW_EXECUTION_UI` property, the `iTool` system will call the `DoExecuteUI` method before calling the `Execute` method. The `DoExecuteUI` method is responsible for displaying a user interface that collects the appropriate information and storing that information in properties of the operation object.

Note

`iTools` provided with `IDL` that need to collect user input in this manner use the *UI service* mechanism, described in [Chapter 11, “iTool User Interface Architecture”](#). While it is possible for the `DoExecuteUI` method to perform all the necessary functions directly, using a `UI` service is the preferred method.

Two predefined user interface services are provided for use in `DoExecuteUI` methods:

- The PropertySheet UI service displays the operation’s property sheet before execution.
- For operations that return a two-dimensional array, the Operation Preview UI service displays the operation’s property sheet and a small window that previews the result of the operation.

See [“Predefined iTool UI Services”](#) on page 295 for additional details.

Example DoExecuteUI Method

The following example code shows a simple DoExecuteUI method for the `ExampleDataOp` operation. This method relies on a UI service named `'ExampleDataOp'` being registered with the current iTool.

```
FUNCTION ExampleDataOp::DoExecuteUI

    oTool = self->GetTool()
    IF (oTool EQ OBJ_NEW()) THEN RETURN, 0

    RETURN, oTool->DoUIService('ExampleDataOp', self)

END
```

Discussion

If the `SHOW_EXECUTION_UI` property is set on our `ExampleDataOp` operation object, the `DoExecuteUI` method is called automatically when the user invokes the operation. This method does the following:

1. Retrieve a reference to the current iTool object using the `GetTool` method of the `IDLitIMessaging` class. (`IDLitIMessaging` is a superclass of `IDLitOperation`, and thus of `IDLitDataOperation`.)
2. If the retrieved iTool object reference is a null object reference, no data about the current tool is available, so we return immediately without calling the UI service.
3. Call the `ExampleDataOp` UI service. Since our `ExampleDataOp` operation has only one property of its own (`ByteTop`), the `ExampleDataOp` UI presumably allows the user to set this value. See [Chapter 13, “Creating a User Interface Service”](#) for discussion of UI services.

Creating a GetProperty Method

The operation class `GetProperty` method retrieves property values from the operation object instance or from instance data of other associated objects. It should retrieve the

requested property value, either from the operation object's instance data or by calling another class' GetProperty method.

Note

Any property registered with a call to the RegisterProperty method must be listed as a keyword to the GetProperty method either of the operation class or one of its superclasses.

See “IDLitDataOperation::GetProperty” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example GetProperty Method

The following example code shows a very simple GetProperty method for the ExampleDataOp operation:

```
PRO ExampleDataOp::GetProperty, $
    BYTETOP = byteTop, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

    IF ARG_PRESENT(byteTop) THEN BEGIN
        byteTop = self._byteTop
    ENDIF

    ; get superclass properties
    IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) GT 0) THEN $
        self->IDLitDataOperation::GetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra

END
```

Discussion

The GetProperty method first defines the keywords it will accept. There must be a keyword for each property of the operation type. The keyword inheritance mechanism allows properties to be retrieved from the ExampleDataOp class' superclasses without knowing the names of the properties.

Using the ARG_PRESENT function, we check for the presence of keywords in the call to the GetProperty method. If a keyword is detected, we retrieve the value of the associated property. In this example, only one property (ByteTop) is specific to the ExampleDataOp object. We retrieve the value of the ByteTop property directly from the ExampleDataOp object's instance data.

Finally, we call the superclass' GetProperty method, passing in all of the keywords stored in the _extra structure.

Creating a SetProperty Method

The operation class SetProperty method stores property values in the operation object's instance data or in properties of associated objects. It should set the specified property value, either by storing the value directly in the operation object's instance data or by calling another class' SetProperty method.

Note

Any property registered with a call to the RegisterProperty method must be listed as a keyword to the SetProperty method either of the operation class or one of its superclasses.

See “[IDLitDataOperation::SetProperty](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example SetProperty Method

The following example code shows a very simple SetProperty method for the ExampleDataOp operation:

```
PRO ExampleDataOp::SetProperty, BYTETOP = byteTop, $
    _REF_EXTRA = _extra

    IF (N_ELEMENTS(byteTop) GT 0) THEN BEGIN
        self._byteTop = byteTop
    ENDIF

    IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) GT 0) THEN $
        self->IDLitDataOperation::SetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra

END
```

Discussion

The SetProperty method first defines the keywords it will accept. There must be a keyword for each property of the operation. The keyword inheritance mechanism allows properties to be set on the ExampleDataOp class' superclasses without knowing the names of the properties.

Using the N_ELEMENTS function, we check to see whether a value was specified for each keyword. If a value is detected, we set the value of the associated property. In this example, only one property (ByteTop) is specific to the ExampleDataOp object. We set the value of the ExampleProperty directly in the ExampleDataOp object's instance data.

Finally, we call the superclass' SetProperty method, passing in all of the keywords stored in the `_extra` structure.

Creating an UndoExecute Method

The operation class' UndoExecute method is called when the user undoes an invocation of the operation and the REVERSIBLE_OPERATION property is set on the operation object. (See “[Operations and the Undo/Redo System](#)” on page 150 for details on how undo and redo are handled in different situations.) The UndoExecute method must reverse the effect of the Execute method.

The actual processing performed by the UndoExecute method depends entirely on the operation.

Example UndoExecute Method

The following example code shows a simple UndoExecute method for the ExampleDataOp operation, which reverses the operation of the Execute method.

```
FUNCTION ExampleDataOp::UndoExecute, data

    ; If byte data then offsets are 0 and 255, otherwise
    ; use data minimum and maximum.
    offsetMax = (SIZE(data, /TYPE) eq 1) ? 255b : MAX(data)
    offsetMin = (SIZE(data, /TYPE) eq 1) ? 0b : MIN(data)
    data = offsetMax - TEMPORARY(data) + offsetMin
    RETURN, 1

END
```

Discussion

When the user undoes an invocation of our ExampleDataOp operation, the iTool system supplies the data that were computed by the Execute method when the operation was invoked. Our UndoExecute method then reverses the original operation.

Creating a New Generalized Operation

Generalized operations are iTool operations that are not limited to acting on data that underlies a visualization. Generalized operations are based on the `IDLitOperation` class. The class definition file for an `IDLitOperation` object must (at the least) provide methods to initialize the operation class, get and set property values, execute the operation, undo and redo the operation, and define the operation class structure. Complex operations will likely provide additional methods.

How an IDLitOperation Works

When an `IDLitOperation` is requested by a user, the operation's `DoAction` method (which must be provided by the operation class' developer) is called. The `DoAction` method is responsible for doing the following:

1. Retrieving the currently selected items and determining which items the operation should be applied to.
2. Creating an `IDLitCommandSet` object to contain undo/redo information.
3. Recording the initial values of the selected objects in the `IDLitCommandSet` object, if necessary.
4. Performing the actions associated with the operation.
5. Recording the final values of the selected objects in the `IDLitCommandSet` object, if necessary.
6. Returning the `IDLitCommandSet` object.

Creating an IDLitOperation

The process of creating an `IDLitDataOperation` is outlined in the following sections:

- [“Creating the Class Structure Definition”](#) on page 166
- [“Creating an Init Method”](#) on page 167
- [“Creating a Cleanup Method”](#) on page 171
- [“Creating a DoAction Method”](#) on page 172
- [“Creating a RecordInitialValues Method”](#) on page 174
- [“Creating a RecordFinalValues Method”](#) on page 175
- [“Creating a GetProperty Method”](#) on page 176

- [“Creating a SetProperty Method”](#) on page 177
- [“Creating an UndoOperation Method”](#) on page 178
- [“Creating a RedoOperation Method”](#) on page 179

Creating the Class Structure Definition

When any IDL object is created, IDL looks for an IDL class structure definition that specifies the instance data fields needed by an instance of the object, along with the data types of those fields. The object class structure must have been defined *before* any objects of the type are created. In practice, when the IDL OBJ_NEW function attempts to create an instance of a specified object class, it executes a procedure named *ObjectClass__define* (where *ObjectClass* is the name of the object), which is expected to define an IDL structure variable with the correct name and structure fields. For additional information on how IDL creates object instances, see [“The Object Lifecycle”](#) in Chapter 13 of the *Object Programming* manual.

Note

The class structure definition is generally the last routine in the `.pro` file that defines an object class.

Subclassing from the IDLitOperation Class

The IDLitOperation class is the base class for all iTool operations. In almost all cases, new operations will be subclassed either from the IDLitOperation class or from a class that is a subclass of IDLitOperation.

Note

If your operation acts directly on data, rather than affecting the visual appearance of objects in the iTool, you may be able to subclass from IDLitDataContainer. See [“Creating a New Data-Centric Operation”](#) on page 152 for details.

See [“IDLitOperation”](#) in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details on the methods and properties available to classes that subclass from IDLitOperation.

Example Class Structure Definition

The following is the class structure definition for the `ExampleOp` operation class. This procedure should be the last procedure in a file named `exampleop__define.pro`.

```
PRO ExampleOp__Define
```

```
struct = { ExampleOp, INHERITS IDLitOperation}

END
```

Discussion

The purpose of the structure definition routine is to define a named IDL structure with structure fields that will contain the operation object instance data. The structure name should be the same as the operation's class name — in this case, `ExampleOp`.

Like many iTool operations that act on data, `ExampleOp` is created as a subclass of the `IDLitOperation` class. The `ExampleOp` Operation class does not include any instance data of its own.

Note

This example is intended to demonstrate how simple it can be to create a new operation class definition. While the class definition for an operation class with significant extra functionality will likely define additional structure fields, and may inherit from other iTool classes, the basic principles are the same.

Creating an Init Method

The operation class `Init` method handles any initialization required by the operation object, and should do the following:

- define the `Init` function method, using the keyword inheritance mechanism to handle “extra” keywords
- call the `Init` methods of any superclasses, using the keyword inheritance mechanism to pass “extra” keywords
- register any properties of the operation, and set property attributes as necessary
- perform other initialization steps as necessary
- return the value 1 if the initialization steps are successful, or 0 otherwise

Definition of the Init Function

Begin by defining the argument and keyword list for your `Init` method. The argument and keyword list defines positional parameters (arguments) accepted by your method, defines any keywords that will be handled directly by your method, and specifies whether keywords not explicitly handled by your method will be passed through to other routines called by your method via IDL's keyword inheritance mechanism.

Note

Because iTool operations are invoked by the user's interactive choice of an item from a menu, they generally do not accept any keywords of their own.

The function signature of an Init method for an operation generally looks something like this:

```
FUNCTION MyOperation::Init, _REF_EXTRA = _extra
```

where *MyOperation* is the name of your operation class.

Note

Always use keyword inheritance (the `_REF_EXTRA` keyword) to pass keyword parameters through to any called routines. (See “[Keyword Inheritance](#)” in Chapter 5 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for details on IDL's keyword inheritance mechanism.)

Superclass Initialization

The operation class Init method should call the Init method of any required superclass. For example, if your operation class is based on an existing operation, you would call that operation's Init method:

```
success = self->SomeOperationClass::Init(_EXTRA = _extra)
```

where *SomeOperationClass* is the class definition file for the operation on which your new operation is based. The variable `success` contains a 1 if the initialization was successful.

Note

Your operation class may have multiple superclasses. In general, each superclass' Init method should be invoked by your class' Init method.

Error Checking

Rather than simply calling the superclass Init method, it is a good idea to check whether the call to the superclass Init method succeeded. The following statement checks the value returned by the superclass Init method; if the returned value is 0 (indicating failure), the current Init method also immediately returns with a value of 0:

```
IF (self->SomeOperationClass::Init(_EXTRA = _extra) EQ 0) THEN $  
RETURN, 0
```


This convention is used in all operation classes included with IDL. RSI strongly suggests that you include similar checks in your own class definition files.

Keywords to the Init Method

Properties of the operation class can be set in the Init method by specifying the property names and values as IDL keyword-value pairs. In addition to any keywords implemented directly in the Init method of the superclass on which you base your class, the properties of the IDLitOperation class and the IDLitComponent class are available to any operation class. See “[IDLitOperation Properties](#)” and “[IDLitComponent Properties](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual.

Note

Always use keyword inheritance (the `_EXTRA` keyword) to pass keyword parameters through to the superclass. (See “[Keyword Inheritance](#)” in Chapter 5 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for details on IDL’s keyword inheritance mechanism.)

Standard Base Class

While you can create your new operation class from any existing operation class, in many cases, operations that do not act directly on the data that underlies a visualization will be subclassed directly from the base class IDLitOperation:

```
IF (self->IDLitOperation::Init(_EXTRA = _extra) EQ 0) $
    THEN RETURN, 0
```

The IDLitOperation class provides the base iTool functionality used in all operation classes created by RSI. See “[Subclassing from the IDLitOperation Class](#)” on page 166 for details.

Return Value

If all of the routines and methods used in the Init method execute successfully, it should indicate successful initialization by returning 1. Other operation classes that subclass from your operation class may check this return value, as your routine should check the value returned by any superclass Init methods called.

Registering Properties

Operations can register properties with the iTool. Registered properties show up in the property sheet interface, and can be modified interactively by users. The iTool property interface is described in detail in [Chapter 4, “Property Management”](#).

Register a property by calling the RegisterProperty method of the IDLitComponent class:

```
self->RegisterProperty, PropertyIdentifier [, TypeCode] $
    [, ATTRIBUTE = value]
```

where *PropertyIdentifier* is a string that uniquely identifies the property, *TypeCode* is an integer between 0 and 9 specifying the property data type, and *ATTRIBUTE* is a property attribute. See “[Registering Properties](#)” on page 74 for details.

Setting Property Attributes

If a property has already been registered, perhaps by a superclass of your operation class, you can change the registered attribute values using the `SetPropertyAttribute` method of the `IDLitComponent` class:

```
self->SetPropertyAttribute, Identifier
```

where *Identifier* is the name of the keyword to the `GetProperty` and `SetProperty` methods used to retrieve or change the value of this property. (The *Identifier* is specified in the call to `RegisterProperty` either via the *PropertyName* argument or the `IDENTIFIER` keyword.) See “[Property Attributes](#)” on page 78 for additional details.

Example Init Method

The following example code shows a very simple `Init` method for an operation named `ExampleOp`. This function would be included (along with the class structure definition routine and any other methods defined by the class) in a file named `exampleop__define.pro`.

```
FUNCTION ExampleOp::Init, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

; Initialize the superclass.
IF (self->IDLitOperation::Init(TYPES=['IDLARRAY2D'], $
    NAME='Example Operation', ICON='generic_op', $
    _EXTRA = _extra) NE 1) THEN $
    RETURN, 0

; Unhide the SHOW_EXECUTION_UI property.
self->SetPropertyAttribute, 'SHOW_EXECUTION_UI', HIDE=0

; Return success
RETURN, 1

END
```

Discussion

The `ExampleOp` class is based on the `IDLitOperation` class (discussed in “[Subclassing from the IDLitOperation Class](#)” on page 166). As a result, all of the standard features of an `iTool` operation are already present. We don’t define any

keyword values to be handled explicitly in the Init method, but we do use the keyword inheritance mechanism to pass keyword values through to methods called within the Init method. The `ExampleOp` Init method does the following things:

1. Calls the Init method of the superclass, `IDLitOperation`. We use the `TYPES` keyword to specify that our operation works on data that has the `iTool` data type `'IDLARRAY2D'`, provide a Name for the object instance, and provide an icon. Finally, we use the `_EXTRA` keyword inheritance mechanism to pass through any keywords provided when the `ExampleOp` Init method is called.
2. Returns the integer 1, indicating successful initialization.

Creating a Cleanup Method

The operation class Cleanup method handles any cleanup required by the operation object, and should do the following:

- destroy any pointers or objects created by the operation
- call the superclass' Cleanup method

Calling the superclass' cleanup method will destroy any objects created when the superclass was initialized.

Note

If your operation class is based on the `IDLitOperation` class, and does not create any pointers or objects of its own, the Cleanup method is not strictly required. It is always safest, however, to create a Cleanup method that calls the superclass' Cleanup method.

See “[IDLitOperation::Cleanup](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example Cleanup Method

The following example code shows a very simple Cleanup method for the `ExampleOp` operation:

```
PRO ExampleOp::Cleanup
    ; Clean up superclass
    self->IDLitOperation::Cleanup
END
```

Discussion

Since our operation does not have any instance data of its own, the Cleanup method simply calls the superclass Cleanup method.

Creating a DoAction Method

The operation class DoAction method is called by the iTool system when an operation is requested by the user. (Note that data-centric operations do not need to implement the DoAction method because it is implemented by the IDLitDataOperation class itself.) The DoAction method is responsible for the following:

- determining which objects the operation should be applied to (generally, but not always, the objects that are selected when the operation is invoked)
- retrieving the data from the selected objects
- creating an IDLitCommandSet object that will contain undo/redo data
- saving the state of the selected objects before the actions associated with the operation are performed in the command set object
- performing the requested actions on the selected objects
- saving the state of the selected objects after the actions associated with the operation are performed in the command set object
- returning the command set object

Note

If your operation changes the values of its own registered properties (as the result of user interaction with a dialog or other interface element called by DoUIService, for example), be sure to call the RecordInitialValues and RecordFinalValues methods. This ensures that changes made through the dialog are placed in the undo-redo transaction buffer.

Example DoAction Method

The following example code shows a simple DoAction method for the ExampleOp operation. This operation retrieves the STYLE property of any selected IDLitVisSurface objects and increments its value by 1. Repeated invocations of this operation would cause the selected surfaces to loop through the seven available surface styles.

```
FUNCTION ExampleOp::DoAction, oTool
```

```

; Make sure we have a valid iTool object.
IF ~ OBJ_VALID(oTool) THEN RETURN, OBJ_NEW()

; Get the selected objects
oTargets = oTool->GetSelectedItems()

; Select only IDLitVisSurface objects. If there are
; no surface objects selected, return a null object.
surfaces = OBJ_NEW()
FOR i = 0, N_ELEMENTS(oTargets)-1 DO BEGIN
    IF (OBJ_ISA(oTargets[i], 'IDLitVisSurface')) THEN BEGIN
        surfaces = OBJ_VALID(surfaces[0]) ? $
            [surfaces, oTargets[i]] : oTargets[i]
    ENDIF
ENDFOR

IF (~OBJ_VALID(surfaces[0])) THEN RETURN, OBJ_NEW()

; Create a command set:
oCmdSet = self->IDLitOperation::DoAction(oTool)

; Record the initial values
IF (~ self->RecordInitialValues(oCmdSet, surfaces, '')) THEN $
    BEGIN
        OBJ_DESTROY, oCmdSet
        RETURN, OBJ_NEW()
    ENDIF

; Increment the style index for each surface.
FOR i = 0, N_ELEMENTS(surfaces)-1 DO BEGIN
    ; Retrieve the current surface style and increment it
    surfaces[i]->GetProperty, STYLE = styleIndex
    IF styleIndex eq 6 THEN BEGIN
        styleIndex = 0
    ENDIF ELSE BEGIN
        styleIndex += 1
    ENDELSE

    ; Set the new surface style
    surfaces[i]->SetProperty, STYLE = styleIndex
ENDFOR

oTool->RefreshCurrentWindow

; Record the final values
result = self->RecordFinalValues(oCmdSet, surfaces, '')

RETURN, oCmdSet

```

END

Discussion

The ExampleOp operation DoAction method does the following things:

1. Checks the validity of the iTool object passed to the DoAction method.
2. Retrieves the list of selected objects from the iTool object.
3. Filters out any selected objects that are not IDLitVisSurface objects.
4. Calls the superclass DoAction method to create an IDLitCommandSet object.
5. Calls the RecordInitialValues method to record the relevant values in the command set object before the operation is performed.
6. Loops through the list of IDLitVisSurface objects and increments the STYLE property of each by 1.
7. Calls the RecordFinalValues method to record the relevant values in the command set object after the operation has been performed.
8. Returns the command set object.

Creating a RecordInitialValues Method

The operation class RecordInitialValues method is responsible for recording the appropriate “before” values from the specified objects in the provided IDLitCommandSet object. The values recorded depend entirely on the operation being performed.

Example RecordInitialValues Method

The following example code shows a simple RecordInitialValues method for the ExampleOp operation. An IDLitCommand object is created for each of the target objects, and the value of the STYLE property of each object is recorded as an Item in the command object.

```
FUNCTION ExampleOp::RecordInitialValues, oCmdSet, oTargets, idProp

    ; Loop through the target objects and record the value of the
    ; STYLE property.
    FOR i = 0, N_ELEMENTS(oTargets)-1 DO BEGIN
        ; Create a command object to store the values.
        oCmd = OBJ_NEW('IDLitCommand', $
            TARGET_IDENTIFIER = oTargets[i]->GetFullIdentifier())
        ; Get the value of the STYLE property
```

```

oTargets[i]->GetProperty, STYLE = styleIndex
; Add the value to the command object
void = oCmd->AddItem('OLD_STYLE', styleIndex)
; Add the command object to the command set
oCmdSet->Add, oCmd
ENDFOR

RETURN, 1

END

```

Discussion

The ExampleOp operation RecordInitialValues method simply loops through the supplied list of target objects, creating a new IDLitCommand object for each. We set the TARGET_IDENTIFIER property for each command object. Next, we retrieve the value of the STYLE property for each target object and add it to the command object as an Item. Finally, we add each command object to the supplied IDLitCommandSet object.

Creating a RecordFinalValues Method

The operation class RecordFinalValues method is responsible for recording the appropriate “after” values from the specified objects in the provided IDLitCommandSet object. The values recorded depend entirely on the operation being performed.

Example RecordFinalValues Method

The following example code shows a simple RecordFinalValues method for the ExampleOp operation. The new value of the STYLE property of each target object is recorded in the appropriate IDLitCommand object retrieved from the command set.

```

FUNCTION ExampleOp::RecordFinalValues, oCmdSet, oTargets, idProp

; Loop through the target objects and record the value of the
; STYLE property.
FOR i = 0, N_ELEMENTS(oTargets)-1 DO BEGIN
; Retrieve the appropriate command object from the
; command set.
oCmd = oCmdSet->Get(POSITION = i)
; Get the value of the STYLE property
oTargets[i]->GetProperty, STYLE = styleIndex
; Add the value to the command object
void = oCmd->AddItem('NEW_STYLE', styleIndex)
ENDFOR

```

```
RETURN, 1
```

```
END
```

Discussion

The ExampleOp operation RecordFinalValues method simply loops through the supplied list of target objects, recording the new value for the STYLE property in the IDLitCommand object associated with each target.

Creating a GetProperty Method

The operation class GetProperty method retrieves property values from the operation object instance or from instance data of other associated objects. It should retrieve the requested property value, either from the operation object's instance data or by calling another class' GetProperty method.

Note

Any property registered with a call to the RegisterProperty method must be listed as a keyword to the GetProperty method either of the operation class or one of its superclasses.

See “IDLitOperation::GetProperty” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example GetProperty Method

The following example code shows a very simple GetProperty method for the ExampleOp operation:

```
PRO ExampleOp::GetProperty, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

    ; get superclass properties
    IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) GT 0) THEN $
        self->IDLitOperation::GetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra

END
```

Discussion

The GetProperty method first defines the keywords it will accept. There must be a keyword for each property of the operation type. The keyword inheritance mechanism allows properties to be retrieved from the ExampleOp class' superclasses without knowing the names of the properties.

In this example, there are no properties specific to the `ExampleOp` object, so we simply call the superclass' `GetProperty` method, passing in all of the keywords stored in the `_extra` structure.

Creating a SetProperty Method

The operation class `SetProperty` method stores property values in the operation object's instance data or in properties of associated objects. It should set the specified property value, either by storing the value directly in the operation object's instance data or by calling another class' `SetProperty` method.

Note

Any property registered with a call to the `RegisterProperty` method must be listed as a keyword to the `SetProperty` method either of the operation class or one of its superclasses.

See “[IDLitOperation::SetProperty](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example SetProperty Method

The following example code shows a very simple `SetProperty` method for the `ExampleOp` operation:

```
PRO ExampleOp::SetProperty, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

    IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) GT 0) THEN $
        self->IDLitOperation::SetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra

    END
```

Discussion

The `SetProperty` method first defines the keywords it will accept. There must be a keyword for each property of the operation. The keyword inheritance mechanism allows properties to be set on the `ExampleOp` class' superclasses without knowing the names of the properties.

In this example, there are no properties specific to the `ExampleOp` object, so we simply use the `N_ELEMENTS` function to check whether the `_extra` structure contains any elements. If it does, we call the superclass' `SetProperty` method, passing in all of the keywords stored in the `_extra` structure.

Creating an UndoOperation Method

The operation class UndoOperation method is called when the user undoes the operation by selecting “Undo” from a menu or toolbar.

Example UndoOperation Method

The following example code shows a very simple UndoOperation method for the ExampleOp operation:

```
FUNCTION ExampleOp::UndoOperation, oCommandSet

    ; Retrieve the IDLitCommand objects stored in the
    ; command set object.
    oCmds = oCommandSet->Get(/ALL, COUNT = nObjs)

    ; Get a reference to the iTool object.
    oTool = self->GetTool()

    ; Loop through the IDLitCommand objects and restore the
    ; original values.
    FOR i = 0, nObjs-1 DO BEGIN
        oCmds[i]->GetProperty, TARGET_IDENTIFIER = idTarget
        oTarget = oTool->GetByIdentifier(idTarget)
        ; Get the old value
        IF (oCmds[i]->GetItem('OLD_STYLE', styleIndex) EQ 1) THEN $
            oTarget->SetProperty, STYLE = styleIndex
    ENDFOR

    RETURN, 1
END
```

Discussion

The UndoOperation method does the following things:

1. Retrieves an array of IDLitCommand objects from the supplied IDLitCommandSet object
2. Gets a reference to the iTool object.
3. For each command object, retrieve the identifier string for the target object. Use the identifier string to retrieve a reference to the target object itself.
4. Retrieve the OLD_STYLE item from the command object and use its value to set the STYLE property on the target object.

Note

The UndoOperation method could also have been implemented without the use of the values stored in the command set object simply by decrementing the value of the STYLE property for each target.

Creating a RedoOperation Method

The operation class RedoOperation method is called when the user redoes the operation by selecting “Redo” from a menu or toolbar.

Example RedoOperation Method

The following example code shows a very simple RedoOperation method for the ExampleOp operation:

```
FUNCTION ExampleOp::RedoOperation, oCommandSet

    ; Retrieve the IDLitCommand objects stored in the
    ; command set object.
    oCmds = oCommandSet->Get(/ALL, COUNT = nObjs)

    ; Get a reference to the iTool object.
    oTool = self->GetTool()

    ; Loop through the IDLitCommand objects and restore the
    ; new values.
    FOR i = 0, nObjs-1 DO BEGIN
        oCmds[i]->GetProperty, TARGET_IDENTIFIER = idTarget
        oTarget = oTool->GetByIdentifier(idTarget)
        ; Get the new value
        IF (oCmds[i]->GetItem('NEW_STYLE', styleIndex) EQ 1) THEN $
            oTarget->SetProperty, STYLE = styleIndex
    ENDFOR

    RETURN, 1
END
```

Discussion

The RedoOperation method does the following things:

1. Retrieves an array of IDLitCommand objects from the supplied IDLitCommandSet object
2. Gets a reference to the iTool object.

3. For each command object, retrieve the identifier string for the target object. Use the identifier string to retrieve a reference to the target object itself.
4. Retrieve the `NEW_STYLE` Item from the command object and use its value to set the `STYLE` property on the target object.

Note

The `RedoOperation` method could also have been implemented without the use of the values stored in the command set object simply by incrementing the value of the `STYLE` property for each target.

Operations and Macros

The concept of a *macro* was introduced to the iTool system in IDL 6.1. Macros allow iTool users to record a series of actions for later playback. A related feature, the *history* of an iTool, lists all actions performed in a given iTool, whether or not actions are currently being recorded. For additional information on macros and history, see [Chapter 8, “Working with Macros”](#) in the *iTool User’s Guide* manual.

In many cases, operations you create will automatically be placed in the history (and be available for recording) when a user invokes them. Specifically, if you create an operation with an `Execute` or `DoAction` method that does not display a user interface, you do not need to do anything special to ensure that your operation is recorded properly.

If your operation displays a user interface, you must ensure that the `SHOW_EXECUTION_UI` property of the operation is *unhidden*. `SHOW_EXECUTION_UI` is a property of all operations, but it is hidden by default. To unhide the property, insert the following line into the `Init` method of your operation:

```
self->SetPropertyAttribute, 'SHOW_EXECUTION_UI', HIDE=0
```

The execution user interface must be unhidden to allow user control of the dialog in a macro item for the operation. The default value of the `SHOW_EXECUTION_UI` property can be set to either 0 (False) or 1 (True); it is only important that the property is visible. When an operation is added to a macro, the `SHOW_EXECUTION_UI` property for that macro item will be set to 0 (False), regardless of the current setting of the property for the operation itself.

The user interface for your operation should only modify properties of the operation itself. Changes to properties other than those of the operation that are made by the operation’s user interface will not be recorded.

Registering an Operation

Before an operation can be performed by an iTool, the operation's class definition must be registered as being available to the iTool. Registering an operation with the iTool links the class definition file that contains the actual IDL code that defines the operation with a simple string that names the type. Code that performs an operation in an iTool uses the name string to specify which operation should be performed.

Using IDLitTool::RegisterOperation

In most cases, you will register an operation with the iTool in the iTool's class Init method. Registration ensures that the operation is available to the iTool. (See [“Creating a New iTool Class”](#) on page 91 for details on the iTool class Init method.)

To register an operation, call the IDLitTool::RegisterOperation method:

```
self->RegisterOperation, OperationName, Operation_Class_Name
```

where *OperationName* is the string you will use when referring to the operation, and *Operation_Class_Name* is a string that specifies the name of the class file that contains the operation's definition.

Note

The file *Operation_Class_Name__define.pro* must exist somewhere in IDL's path for the visualization type to be successfully registered.

See [“IDLitTool::RegisterOperation”](#) in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

Specifying Useful Properties

You can set any property of the [IDLitOperation](#) and [IDLitComponent](#) classes when registering an operation. The following properties may be of particular interest:

EXPENSIVE_COMPUTATION

A boolean value that indicates whether the operation is *expensive*. Expensive operations are those that require significant memory or processing time to execute. Individual operations should use the value of this property to determine whether the results of the operation should be cached to avoid re-execution when undoing or redoing.

ICON

A string value giving the name of an icon to be associated with this object. Typically, this property is the name of a bitmap file to be used when displaying the object in a tree view. See “[Icon Bitmaps](#)” on page 44 for details on where bitmap icon files are located.

IDENTIFIER

A string that will be used as the identifier of the object. Identifier strings specify where within an iTool’s object hierarchy an object is located; this, in turn, may affect whether and where the object is revealed in the iTool’s graphical user interface. For example, to display a menu item for an operation named 'MyOperation' in the iTool **Operations** menu, you would specify the identifier string 'Operations/MyOperation'. See “[iTool Object Identifiers](#)” in Chapter 2 of the *iTool Developer’s Guide* manual for details about how identifiers are named.

If this property is not specified, then the value of the *OperationName* argument is used as the identifier.

REVERSIBLE_OPERATION

A boolean value that indicates whether the operation is *reversible*. When an operation is reversible, it can be undone by applying an operation rather than restoring a stored value. Rotation by a specified angle is an example of an operation that is reversible, since applying another rotation by the same angle in the opposite direction returns the visualization to its original state. Individual operations should use the value of this property to determine how the operation should be undone.

SHOW_EXECUTION_UI

A boolean value that indicates whether the operation should display a user interface element such as a dialog when the operation is executed.

TYPES

A string or an array of strings indicating the types of data to which the operation can be applied. iTools data types are described in [Chapter 3, “Data Management”](#). Set this property to a null string (' ') to specify that the operation can be applied to all types of data.

Unregistering an Operation

If you are creating a new `iTool` from an existing `iTool` class, you may want to remove an operation registered for the existing class from your new tool. This can be useful if you have an `iTool` class that implements all of the functionality you need, but which registers an operation you don't want included in your `iTool`. Rather than recreating the `iTool` class to remove the operation, you could create your new `iTool` class in such a way that it inherits from the existing `iTool` class, but *unregisters* the unwanted operation.

Unregister an operation by calling the `IDLitTool::UnregisterOperation` method in the `Init` method of your `iTool` class:

```
self->UnregisterOperation, identifier
```

where *identifier* is the string value of the `IDENTIFIER` property specified when registering the operation.

For example, suppose you are creating a new `iTool` that subclasses from the standard `iSurface` tool, which is defined by the `IDLitToolSurface` class. If you wanted your new tool to behave just like the `iSurface` tool, with the exception that it would not handle the `resample` operation, you could include the following method call in your `iTool`'s `Init` method:

```
self->UnregisterOperation, 'Operations/Transform/Resample'
```

Finding the Identifier String

To find the string value used as the *identifier* parameter to the `UnregisterOperation` method, you can inspect the class file that registers the operation (if the operation is registered by a user-created class), or use the `FindIdentifiers` method of the `IDLitTool` object to generate a list of registered operations. (Standard `iTool` operations are pre-registered within the `iTool` framework.)

If the operation is registered in a user-created class, you could inspect the class definition file to find a call to the `RegisterOperation` method, which looks something like this:

```
self->RegisterOperation, 'Resample', 'idlitopresample', $
    IDENTIFIER = 'Operations/Transform/Resample'
```

The value of the `IDENTIFIER` keyword to the `RegisterOperation` method (`'Operations/Transform/Resample'`) is the string value of the operation's `IDENTIFIER` property.

Alternatively, to generate a list of relative identifiers for all operations registered with the current tool, use the following statements:

```
void = ITGETCURRENT(TOOL=oTool)
opslst = oTool->FindIdentifiers(/OPERATIONS)
FOR i = 0, N_ELEMENTS(opslst)-1 DO PRINT, $
    STRMID(opslst[i], STRPOS(opslst[i], '/OPERATIONS', $
        /REVERSE_SEARCH)+1)
```

Note that the string in the call to STRPOS must be in upper case.

To refine the search so that only operations in the “Transform” folder are found, specify a search term as the argument to the FindIdentifiers method:

```
void = ITGETCURRENT(TOOL=oTool)
opslst = oTool->FindIdentifiers('*transform*', /OPERATIONS)
FOR i = 0, N_ELEMENTS(opslst)-1 DO PRINT, $
    STRMID(opslst[i], STRPOS(opslst[i], '/OPERATIONS', $
        /REVERSE_SEARCH)+1)
```

See “[IDLitTool::FindIdentifiers](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

Example: Data Resample Operation

This example creates a data operation to resample data in a dataset using the IDL CONGRID function.

Example Code

The code for this example operation is included in the file `example1_opresample__define.pro` in the `examples/doc/itools` subdirectory of the IDL distribution. Enter

```
example1tool
```

at the IDL prompt to create an instance of an iTool that registers this operation. Open the file in any text editor or enter

```
.edit example1_opresample
```

at the IDLDE prompt to open the `.pro` file in the IDL editor.

Class Definition File

The class definition for `example1_opresample` consists of an `Init` method, an `Execute` method, `GetProperty` and `SetProperty` methods, and a class structure definition routine. As with all object class definition files, the class structure definition routine is the last routine in the file, and the file is given the same name as the class definition routine (with the suffix `.pro` appended).

Class Definition

```
PRO example1_opresample__define

    struc = {example1_opresample, $
        inherits IDLitDataOperation,    $
        _x: 0d, $
        _y: 0d, $
        _z: 0d, $
        _method: 0b $
    }

END
```

Discussion

Our class definition routine is very simple. We create an IDL structure variable with the name `example1_opresample`, specifying that the structure inherits from the `IDLitDataOperation` class. The structure has three instance data fields named `_x`, `_y`, and `_z`, which contain double-precision floating point values, and a single instance data field named `_method` which contains a byte value.

Init Method

```

FUNCTION example1_opresample::Init, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

  IF (~ self->IDLitDataOperation::Init(NAME='Resample', $
    TYPES=['IDLVECTOR','IDLARRAY2D','IDLARRAY3D'], $
    DESCRIPTION="Resampling", _EXTRA = _extra)) THEN $
    RETURN, 0

  ; Default values for resampling factors.
  self._x = 2
  self._y = 2
  self._z = 2

  ; Register properties
  self->RegisterProperty, 'X', /FLOAT, $
    DESCRIPTION='X resampling factor.'

  self->RegisterProperty, 'Y', /FLOAT, $
    DESCRIPTION='Y resampling factor.'

  self->RegisterProperty, 'Z', /FLOAT, $
    DESCRIPTION='Z resampling factor.'

  self->RegisterProperty, 'METHOD', $
    ENUMLIST=['Nearest neighbor', 'Linear', 'Cubic'], $
    NAME='Interpolation method', $
    DESCRIPTION='Interpolation method.'

  IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) GT 0) THEN $
    self->example1_opresample::SetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra

  ; Unhide the SHOW_EXECUTION_UI property.
  self->SetPropertyAttribute, 'SHOW_EXECUTION_UI', HIDE=0

  RETURN, 1

END

```

Discussion

The first item in our class definition file is the Init method. The Init method's function signature is defined first, using the class name `example1_opresample`. The `_REF_EXTRA` keyword inheritance mechanism allows any keywords specified in a call to the Init method to be passed through to routines that are called within the Init method even if we do not know the names of those keywords in advance.

Next, we call the Init method of the superclass. In this case, we are creating a subclass of the `IDLitDataOperation` class; this provides us with all of the standard `iTool` data operation functionality automatically. We specify three `iTool` data types on which our operation will work: “IDLVECTOR”, “IDLARRAY2D”, and “IDLARRAY3D”. Any “extra” keywords specified in the call to our Init method are passed to the `IDLitDataOperation::Init` method via the keyword inheritance mechanism. If the call to the superclass Init method fails, we return immediately with a value of 0.

Next we store the default values for the three resampling factors (one each for the X, Y, and Z dimensions) in the object instance data fields `_x`, `_y`, and `_z`. We register each of these values as a property of the operation. We also register the `METHOD` property, assigning to it an enumerated list with three strings describing three different interpolation methods (“Nearest Neighbor”, “Linear”, and “Cubic”).

If any “extra” keywords were specified in the call to our Init method, we pass them to the `SetProperty` method our `example1_opresample` object.

Finally, we return the value 1 to indicate successful initialization.

Execute Method

```
FUNCTION example1_opresample::Execute, data

    dims = SIZE(data, /DIMENSIONS)

    CASE N_ELEMENTS(dims) OF
        1: newdims = dims*ABS([self._x]) > [1]
        2: newdims = dims*ABS([self._x, self._y]) > [1, 1]
        3: newdims = dims*ABS([self._x, self._y, self._z]) > [1, 1,
1]
    ELSE: RETURN, 0

    ENDCASE

    ; No change in size.
    IF (ARRAY_EQUAL(newdims, dims)) THEN RETURN, 1

    interp = 0 & cubic = 0
    CASE (self._method) OF
```

```

0: ; do nothing
1: interp = 1
2: cubic = 1
ENDCASE

CASE N_ELEMENTS(dims) OF
1: data = CONGRID(data, newdims[0], $
    INTERP = interp, CUBIC = cubic)
2: data = CONGRID(data, newdims[0], newdims[1], $
    INTERP = interp, CUBIC = cubic)
; CONGRID always uses linear interp with 3D
3: data = CONGRID(data, newdims[0], newdims[1], newdims[2])
ENDCASE

RETURN, 1

END

```

Discussion

The Execute method does the work of our operation. Since `example1_opresample` is based on the `IDLitDataOperation` class, when the operation is requested by a user the Execute method is automatically called with each of the currently selected data objects as the data argument.

First, we use the `SIZE` function to determine the number of dimensions of the input data item. We use a `CASE` statement to create a new array (`newdims`) that stores the number of elements of each dimension multiplied by the scale factor for each dimension. The number of elements in each dimension cannot be less than one.

Next we use the `ARRAY_EQUAL` function to compare the number of elements of each dimension of the input data with the number of elements of each dimension of our `newdims` array. If these numbers are equal, no resampling will take place, so we stop processing and return 1 for success.

If our `newdims` array contains a different number of elements than the original input data, some resampling will take place. We check the value of the `METHOD` property (stored in the instance data field `_method`) to determine what type of resampling we should perform.

Finally, we call the `CONGRID` function with the appropriate arguments and keywords, depending on the dimensionality of the input data and the resampling method specified. We then return 1 for success.

GetProperty Method

```

PRO example1_opresample::GetProperty, $
X = x, $

```

```

Y = y, $
Z = z, $
METHOD = method, $
_REF_EXTRA = _extra

; My properties.
IF ARG_PRESENT(x) THEN $
    x = self._x

IF ARG_PRESENT(y) THEN $
    y = self._y

IF ARG_PRESENT(z) THEN $
    z = self._z

IF ARG_PRESENT(method) THEN $
    method = self._method

; Superclass properties.
IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) gt 0) THEN $
    self->IDLitDataOperation::GetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra

END

```

Discussion

The GetProperty method for our operation supports four properties named X, Y, Z, and METHOD, stored in instance data fields of the same name (with an underscore prepended). If any of these properties is specified in the call to the GetProperty method, its value is retrieved from the appropriate instance data field. Any other properties included in the method call are passed to the superclass' GetProperty method.

SetProperty Method

```

PRO example1_opresample::SetProperty, $
    X = x, $
    Y = y, $
    Z = z, $
    METHOD = method, $
    _REF_EXTRA = _extra

; My properties.
IF N_ELEMENTS(x) THEN $
    IF (x NE 0) THEN self._x = x

IF N_ELEMENTS(y) THEN $
    IF (y NE 0) THEN self._y = y

```

```
IF N_ELEMENTS(z) THEN $
  IF (z NE 0) THEN self._z = z

IF N_ELEMENTS(method) THEN $
  self._method = method

; Superclass properties.
IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) gt 0) THEN $
  self->IDLitDataOperation:: SetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra

END
```

Discussion

The SetProperty method for our operation supports four properties named X, Y, Z, and METHOD, stored in instance data fields of the same name (with an underscore prepended). If any of these properties is specified in the call to the SetProperty method, its value is stored in the appropriate instance data field. Any other properties included in the method call are passed to the superclass' SetProperty method.



Chapter 8

Creating a Manipulator

This chapter describes creating a custom manipulator. See the following topics for details.

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| The Manipulator Creation Process | 197 | Registering a Manipulator | 222 |
| Predefined iTool Manipulators | 198 | Unregistering a Manipulator | 224 |
| Manipulators and the Undo/Redo System . | 202 | Example: Color Table Manipulator | 225 |
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Overview of iTool Manipulators

A *manipulator* is an iTool component object class that defines a way the user can interact with visualizations in the iTool window using the mouse or keyboard. Some examples of iTool manipulators are:

- The translation/scaling manipulator, which allows the user to interactively move visualizations around in an iTools window and change their size
- The rotation manipulator, which allows the user to change the orientation of visualizations in two or three dimensions
- The annotation manipulators, which allow the user to insert text, line, polygon, and other annotations

The majority of manipulators are associated with an operation that modifies the data of the selected visualization in some manner. While a manipulator need not specify an associated operation, this is required to support undo/redo functionality as described in “[Manipulators and the Undo/Redo System](#)” on page 202.

A number of standard manipulators and manipulator containers are predefined and included in the IDL iTools package as described in “[Predefined iTool Manipulators](#)” on page 198. If none of the predefined manipulators suit your needs, you can create your own manipulator by subclassing either from the base `IDLitManipulator` class, on which all of the predefined manipulators are based, or from one of the predefined manipulators.

Manipulators and Manipulator Containers

A manipulator is activated when the user clicks on the manipulator’s associated toolbar icon. A manipulator typically modifies attributes of a target object (*e.g.* scales an image), or records a sequence of values (*e.g.* creates an annotation). For a given iTool, there is always a single active manipulator.

Manipulator containers (subclassing from `IDLitManipulatorContainer`) are used to create hierarchies of manipulators, among which the *current* or active manipulator can be defined. The child manipulator (subclassing from `IDLitManipulator`) can be automatically changed based on the selection and what portion of a selection visual is hit during a mouse-down operation. See the `AUTO_SWITCH` property of “[IDLitManipulatorContainer](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details. See the following section for information on selection visuals.

Note

A manipulator need not always be interactively selected. The `IDLitTool::ActivateManipulator` method can be used to programmatically start a manipulator. This can be especially useful when you need to reactivate a tool's default manipulator because none of the conditions required by a custom manipulator have been met.

An `IDLitManipulatorManager` object is a specialized manipulator container that acts as the root of a manipulator hierarchy. The manipulator manager is associated with an `IDLitWindow` object via the window's `SetManipulatorManager` method. The manipulator manager passes information about the manipulator to observers such as toolbars or menu items. See "`IDLitManipulatorManager`" in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

Manipulator Visuals

An `IDLitManipulatorVisual` object is also known as a *selection visual*. A selection visual appears when a manipulator is activated. Advanced manipulators can be configured to interact with a selection visual, defining how a user can modify a visualization. For example, [Figure 8-1](#) displays objects based upon an `IDLitManipVisRotate` object:

- `IDLitManipVisRotate2D` (used when the target is 2-D)
- `IDLitManipVisRotateAxis` (one for the x, y, and z axis, and used when the target is 3-D)

The appearance of the selection visual depends upon whether the data is 2-D (left) or 3-D (right). In the case of 2-D data, the selection visuals indicate an area within the visualization that will allow rotation when you left-click and drag the mouse cursor. In the case of 3-D data, the selection visuals allow rotation around the x-, y-, or z-axis, depending on which portion of the selection visual is selected.

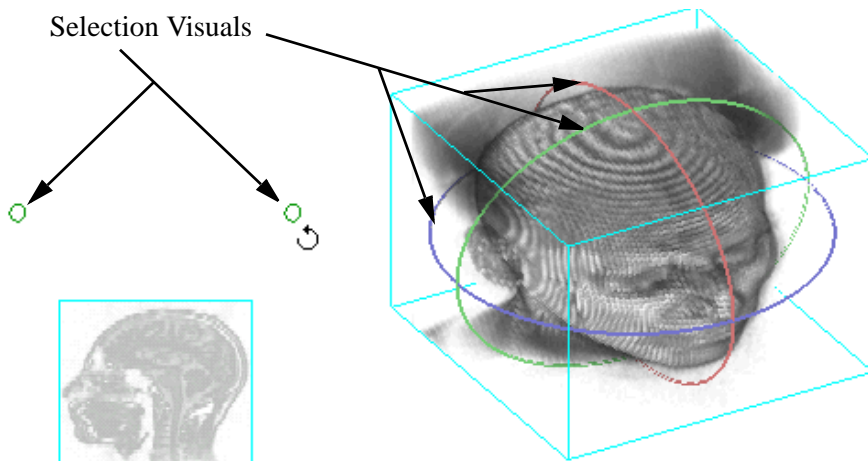


Figure 8-1: Rotate Manipulator Selection Visuals

When you initialize a manipulator, you can define the type of selection visual that appears by setting the `VISUAL_TYPE` keyword to the `Init` method. If you create a custom `IDLitManipulatorVisual` object, then the `VISUAL_TYPE` property values of the `IDLitManipulator` and `IDLitManipulatorVisual` objects are the same. Unless otherwise specified, a custom manipulator will retain the selection visual of the last active manipulator.

Note

Creation of `IDLitManipulatorVisual` objects is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, you may examine the `IDLitManipVis*` classes in the `lib\itools\components` subdirectory of the IDL installation directory as guides if you choose to create a selection visual.

The Manipulator Creation Process

To create a new iTool manipulator, you will do the following:

- Choose an iTool manipulator class on which your new manipulator will be based. In almost all cases, you will base your new manipulator on the `IDLitManipulator` class, which provides methods for detecting selections made by the user, mouse button-press events, mouse motion, and other low-level manipulator functions.
- Define the properties of the manipulator.
- If the manipulator is to support undo/redo functionality, it must have an associated operation. You can create a custom operation, or if the manipulator modifies a property of the target object, you can use the built-in `SET_PROPERTY` operation.
- Define methods that specify what should happen when the manipulator is activated. This includes implementing execution logic within methods that are invoked in response to mouse and keyboard events.
- Define what cursor appears when the manipulator is activated. You can use a custom cursor or a pre-existing cursor.
- Create an icon for the manipulator that will appear on the toolbar. The manipulator will be activated when the user selects the toolbar item.
- Override methods used to get or set properties, react to user interaction with the visualization, and clean up, as necessary.

[This chapter](#) describes the process of creating a new manipulator based on the `IDLitManipulator` class. If you have a number of manipulators that are designed to work together, you will want to create a manipulator container based on the `IDLitManipulatorContainer` class. More advanced manipulators can also be designed to work in conjunction with a custom selection visual, based on the `IDLitManipulatorVisual` class. See [“Manipulator Visuals”](#) on page 195 for introductory information regarding selection visuals.

Predefined iTool Manipulators

The iTool system distributed with IDL includes a number of predefined manipulators. You can include these manipulators in an iTool directly by registering the class with your iTool (as described in “[Registering a Manipulator](#)” on page 222). You can also create a new manipulator class based on one of the predefined classes.

Predefined manipulators include those which are containers (subclassing from `IDLitManipulatorContainer`), and those which are visualization manipulators (subclassing from `IDLitManipulator`). The manipulators themselves allow the user to select and interact with the visualization through mouse movements and keyboard events.

General Manipulators

The following manipulators are available to any tool that subclasses from `IDLitToolbase` unless otherwise noted.

IDLitManipArrow

The arrow manipulator (`IDLitManipArrow`) is used to select a visualization object in the iTool window. It is also a container for the following manipulators:

- `IDLitManipTranslate` — repositions the visualization
- `IDLitManipScale` — resizes the visualization
- `IDLitManipLine` — moves the endpoint vertices of a selected line segment
- `IDLitManipView` — translates and scales views, enabling functionality based on cursor position within the iTool window
- `IDLitManipImagePlane` — moves an image plane in an iVolume tool window or in a window of a tool that subclasses from `IDLitToolVolume`.

IDLitManipAnnotation

The annotation manipulator (`IDLitManipAnnotation`) is used to add text, lines, or shapes to an iTool window. The following annotation manipulators subclass from `IDLitManipAnnotation`:

- `IDLitAnnotateText` — adds text to the iTool window
- `IDLitAnnotateLine` — adds a line to the iTool window
- `IDLitAnnotateRectangle` — adds a rectangle to the iTool window

- `IDLitAnnotateOval` — adds an oval to the iTool window
- `IDLitAnnotatePolygon` — adds a polygon to the iTool window
- `IDLitAnnotateFreehand` — adds a freehand shape to the iTool window

IDLitManipLineProfile

The profile line manipulator creates a profile plot for a line drawn on a surface or image.

IDLitManipRotate

The rotation manipulator rotates a visualization in the iTool window. It is a container for the following manipulators:

- `IDLitManipRotate3D` — repositions a visualization in three dimensions when the visualization is three-dimensional, or in two dimensions when the visualization is two-dimensional
- `IDLitManipRotateX` — rotates a visualization about the x-axis
- `IDLitManipRotateY` — rotates a visualization about the y-axis
- `IDLitManipRotateZ` — rotates a visualization about the z-axis

IDLitManipViewPan

The view pan manipulator, initiated by clicking on the hand tool, pans the view in the iTool window. The hand tool is available only when the zoom level of the view is greater than 100 percent or when the window has been resized and has scroll bars.

IDLitManipViewZoom

The view zoom manipulator changes the scaling of the view in the iTool window. This is not to be confused with `IDLitManipScale`, which resizes the visualization.

Image Manipulators

The following manipulators are available in the iImage iTool and any tools that subclass from `IDLitToolImage`.

IDLitManipCropBox

The crop box manipulator defines a crop region for an image.

IDLitManipROIFree

The freehand ROI manipulator draws a freehand ROI on the image.

IDLitManipROI Oval

The oval ROI manipulator draws an oval ROI on the image.

IDLitManipROI Poly

The polygon ROI manipulator draws a polygonal ROI on the image.

IDLitManipROI Rect

The rectangle ROI manipulator draws a rectangular ROI on the image.

Plot and Contour Manipulators

The following manipulators are available in the iPlot and iContour iTools, and any tools that subclass from IDLitToolPlot or IDLitToolContour.

IDLitManipRange

The range manipulator is available with a plot or contour visualization. The IDLitManipRange manipulator is a container for the following manipulators:

- IDLitManipRangeBox — changes the displayed range of the plot data to that which exists in the range box
- IDLitManipRangePan — scrolls the displayed data range using arrows displayed along the axes
- IDLitManipRangeZoom — zooms in or out on the y-data range, x-data range, or both x- and y-data ranges simultaneously through plus and minus symbols positioned along the plot axes and at the origin

Surface Manipulators

The following manipulator is available in the iSurface iTool and any tools that subclass from IDLitToolSurface.

IDLitManipSurfContour

The surface contour manipulator draws a contour line at the indicated elevation on a surface.

Note

This manipulator is not to be confused with the **Operations** → **Contour** selection, which draws a specified number of contour levels, projected onto the XY plane at Z=0.

Volume Manipulators

The following manipulator is available in the iVolume iTool and any tools that subclass from IDLitToolVolume.

IDLitManiImagePlane

When an image plane has been created using the **Operations** → **Volume** → **Image Plane** selection, clicking on the arrow manipulator tool initiates the image plane manipulator. This manipulator repositions the image plane.

Manipulators and the Undo/Redo System

A manipulator can be configured to support undo/redo functionality when it invokes an associated operation that records the actions performed by the manipulator in the undo/redo buffer. This operation can be a custom operation or an existing operation. (See [Chapter 7, “Creating an Operation”](#) for details on operation creation.) In the manipulator class `Init` method, specify a string value for the `OPERATION_IDENTIFIER` keyword to indicate the name of the operation associated with the manipulator.

Note

If the manipulator modifies a property exposed on the target object, you can specify the built-in `SET_PROPERTY` operation to manage undo-redo information. Set `OPERATION_IDENTIFIER = 'SET_PROPERTY'` as shown in [“Creating a Manipulator Init Method”](#) on page 208. This built-in operation automates undo/redo transactions.

When using the `SET_PROPERTY` operation, you must also set the `PARAMETER_IDENTIFIER` keyword during initialization. Set this keyword to the property identifier of the property being manipulated. To determine the identifiers of a visualization’s properties, you can retrieve the object’s identifier and retrieve the names of all registered properties as described in [“Retrieving Property Information”](#) in Appendix A. The following example uses the `itPropertyReport` procedure to print all the registered property names and identifiers supported by the object to the Output Log window. The following sample code shows how to retrieve the properties associated with an image.

```

; Get the tool reference.
idtool=ITGETCURRENT(TOOL = oTool)

; Retrieve the parameter identifier for the the image.
; Print the identifier, name and type of each associated
; registered property using the ItPropertyReport procedure.
vImage = oTool->FindIdentifiers('*image*', /VISUALIZATION)
itPropertyReport, otool, vImage

```

Note

See [“Retrieving Property Information”](#) in Appendix A for more information about property identifiers and names.

Capturing Information for the Undo/Redo System

The initial and final values of the manipulated item must be recorded so that the operation can be undone and redone. Two manipulator object methods allow you to specify when values are initially recorded and committed. The `RecordUndoValues` and `CommitUndoValues` methods work in conjunction with the operation defined during manipulator initialization by the `OPERATION_IDENTIFIER` keyword. The `RecordUndoValues` and `CommitUndoValues` methods are inherited by classes that subclass from `IDLitManipulator`.

The `RecordUndoValues` Method

The `RecordUndoValues` method records the initial values of the item being manipulated. This method is typically called in the `OnMouseDown` or `OnKeyboard` method of an interactive manipulator. When called, the manipulator retrieves the associated operation and calls the operation's `RecordInitialValues` method. See [“Creating a `RecordInitialValues` Method”](#) on page 174 for more information on this method.

If your manipulator uses the built-in `SET_PROPERTY` operation, the initial value of the property specified in the `PARAMETER_IDENTIFIER` is recorded and automatically transacted when you call the `RecordUndoValues` method. See [“Implementing an `OnMouseDown` Method”](#) on page 213 for a short example.

The `CommitUndoValues` Method

The `CommitUndoValues` method records final values resulting from the manipulator action. When a transaction is completed, call the `CommitUndoValues` method to place initial and final values into the undo/redo buffer. This method is typically called in the `OnMouseUp` method or `OnKeyboard` method of an interactive manipulator. When called, the manipulator retrieves the associated operation and calls the operation's `RecordFinalValues` method. See [“Creating a `RecordFinalValues` Method”](#) on page 175 for more information on this method.

If your manipulator uses the built-in `SET_PROPERTY` operation, the final value of the property specified in the `PARAMETER_IDENTIFIER` is recorded and automatically transacted when you call the `CommitUndoValues` method. See [“Implementing an `OnMouseUp` Method”](#) on page 216 for a short example.

Using Manipulator Public Instance Data

The `IDLitManipulator` class automatically manages selection state between mouse-down and mouse-up interactions. Three public instance fields are exposed, providing information about the mouse button state (`ButtonPress`), the number of selected items (`nSelectionList`), and an array of the currently selected visualizations (`pSelectionList`).

Note

These fields are set by the `OnMouseDown` method of `IDLitManipulator`, which would be called by the `OnMouseDown` method of the subclass. These fields are therefore available after a mouse down event in the `iTool` window.

Using the `ButtonPress` Field

The `ButtonPress` field holds the state of mouse buttons when a manipulator has been activated. For example, suppose your manipulator requires the user to hold down a mouse button while moving the mouse cursor to affect some aspect of the visualization. You could use a pointer, set in the mouse down event and not reset until the mouse up event, to indicate the user is holding down the mouse button. However, a more efficient way is to use the built-in `ButtonPress` field to access the same information. The `ButtonPress` field is a bitmask with the following possible values:

- 0 = No mouse button is pressed
- 1 = The left mouse button is pressed
- 2 = The middle mouse button is pressed
- 4 = The right mouse button is pressed

To determine if the user is holding down a mouse button, query the `ButtonPress` field in the `OnMouseMove` method. Prior to manipulating a visualization, a statement such as the following would assure a mouse button was pressed:

```
; Activate if mouse button is held down.  
IF self.ButtonPress NE 0 THEN BEGIN
```

You could modify this statement to determine which mouse button is pressed or access the field in one of the other mouse transaction methods. See [“Creating Mouse Event Methods”](#) on page 213 for more information about the `OnMouseDown`, `OnMouseMove` and `OnMouseUp` methods.

Using the nSelectionList Field

The `nSelectionList` field contains the number of currently selected items in the window associated with the current manipulator. This corresponds to the number of visualizations contained within the `pSelectionList` pointer, described in the following section. If no visualizations have been selected, the `nSelectionList` value equals 0 and the `pSelectionList` will contain an undefined IDL variable. The `nSelectionList` can be used to ensure the user has made a selection. For example, in an `OnMouseDown` method, you may use a statement similar to the following to ensure a selection has been made:

```

; If nothing selected we are done.
IF (self.nSelectionList EQ 0) THEN $
    RETURN

```

The `nSelectionList` field value can also be used to loop through the collection of selected visualizations as shown in the following section.

Using the pSelectionList Pointer Field

The `pSelectionList` field is a pointer to an array of visualizations currently selected in the window. Use the `nSelectionList` value to cycle through this array. If a manipulator only acts upon visualizations of a certain type you can verify the type of each selected item in `pSelectionList` before attempting to modify the visualization. The `nSelectionList` and `pSelectionList` public instance data fields are available from any manipulator object's predefined or custom methods.

```

; Loop through all selected visualizations.
FOR i=0, self.nSelectionList-1 DO BEGIN
    oVis = (*self.pSelectionList)[i]

    ; Verify type of visualization or manipulate it.
    ; ...

ENDFOR

```

Note

The `pSelectionList` field is a pointer. You must use IDL pointer syntax to access items in the field.

See “[Example: Color Table Manipulator](#)” on page 225 for a complete example that uses these public instance data fields.

Creating a New Manipulator

The manipulator class definition file will have the following components:

- A Class Structure Definition — this creates an instance of the manipulator class and instantiates required instance data. See [“Creating the Manipulator Class Structure Definition”](#) on page 207.
- An Init method — this method initializes a manipulator object. See [“Creating a Manipulator Init Method”](#) on page 208.
- A Cleanup method — this method destroys pointers or objects created by the manipulator. See [“Creating a Cleanup Method”](#) on page 212.
- OnMouseDown, OnMouseUp, OnMouseMove methods — these methods perform actions when the user activates the manipulator and interacts with the visualization using the mouse. See [“Creating Mouse Event Methods”](#) on page 213.
- An OnKeyboard method — this method links keyboard events to manipulator actions. See [“Creating an OnKeyboard Method”](#) on page 217.
- A DoRegisterCursor method — this method lets you create and register a custom manipulator cursor that appears when the manipulator is activated. See [“Creating a RegisterCursor Method”](#) on page 218.
- GetProperty or SetProperty methods — these methods let you retrieve or configure properties of the manipulator or its superclasses. See [“Creating GetProperty or SetProperty Methods”](#) on page 220.
- Within appropriate components, invoke the manipulator’s RecordUndoValues and CommitUndoValues methods — these methods call associated operation methods to support undo/redo system transactions. See [“Manipulators and the Undo/Redo System”](#) on page 202.

Note

As the RecordUndoValues and CommitUndoValues methods help automate the transaction process, you would typically not need to override the default superclass methods.

- Other methods specific to the manipulator.

Creating the Manipulator Class Structure Definition

When any IDL object is created, IDL looks for an IDL class structure definition that specifies the instance data fields needed by an instance of the object, along with the data types of those fields. The object class structure must be defined *before* any objects of the type are created. In practice, when the IDL OBJ_NEW function attempts to create an instance of a specified object class, it executes a procedure named *ObjectClass__define* (where *ObjectClass* is the name of the object), which is expected to define an IDL structure variable with the correct name and structure fields. For additional information on how IDL creates object instances, see “[The Object Lifecycle](#)” in Chapter 13 of the *Object Programming* manual.

Note

The class structure definition is generally the last routine in the `.pro` file that defines an object class.

Subclassing From the IDLitManipulator Class

The IDLitManipulator class is the base class for all iTool manipulators. In almost all cases, new manipulators will be subclassed either from the IDLitManipulator class or from a class that is a subclass of IDLitManipulator.

Note

If you are implementing a number of manipulators that provide similar functionality, and you want the user to choose one out of the group of items, you may want to create a manipulator container. See “[Manipulators and Manipulator Containers](#)” on page 194 for an introduction to these objects.

See “[IDLitManipulator](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details on the methods and properties available to classes that subclass from IDLitManipulator.

Example Class Structure Definition

The following is the class structure definition for the `ExampleManip` operation class. This procedure should be the last procedure in a file named `examplemanip__define.pro`.

```
; Class Definition.
PRO ExampleManip__define

; Define the MyManipulator class structure, which inherits the
; IDLitManipulator class.
struct = { ExampleManip, $
```

```
    INHERITS IDLitManipulator, $ Superclass
    oImage: OBJ_NEW(),          $ Target image
}

END
```

Discussion

The purpose of the structure definition routine is to define a named IDL structure with structure fields that will contain the manipulator object instance data. The structure name should be the same as the manipulator’s class name — in this case, `ExampleManip`.

Like many iTool manipulators, `ExampleManip` is created as a subclass of the `IDLitManipulator` class. The `ExampleManip` manipulator class includes one instance data field that will contain a reference to the target image object being manipulated.

Note

This example is intended to demonstrate how simple it can be to create a new manipulator class definition. While the class definition for a manipulator class with significant extra functionality will likely define additional structure fields, and may inherit from other iTool classes, the basic principles are the same. See [“Example: Color Table Manipulator”](#) on page 225 for a more complex class structure definition.

Creating a Manipulator Init Method

The manipulator class `Init` method handles any initialization required by the manipulator object, and should do the following:

- Define the `Init` function method
- Call the `Init` methods of any superclasses
- Register any manipulator properties and set property attributes as necessary
- Perform other initialization steps as necessary
- Return a value of 1 if the initialization steps are successful, or 0 otherwise

The Manipulator Init Function

Begin by defining the argument and keyword list for your `Init` method. The argument and keyword list defines positional parameters (arguments) accepted by your method, defines any keywords that will be handled directly by your method, and specifies

whether keywords not explicitly handled by your method will be passed through to other routines called by your method via IDL's keyword inheritance mechanism.

Note

Because iTool manipulators are invoked by the user's interactive choice of a toolbar item, they generally do not accept any keywords of their own.

The function signature of an Init method for a manipulator generally looks something like this:

```
FUNCTION MyManipulator::Init, _REF_EXTRA = _extra
```

where *MyManipulator* is the name of your manipulator class.

Note

Always use keyword inheritance (the `_REF_EXTRA` keyword) to pass keyword parameters through to any called routines. See “[Keyword Inheritance](#)” in Chapter 5 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for details on IDL's keyword inheritance mechanism.

Superclass Initialization

The manipulator class Init method should call the Init method of any required superclass. For example, if your manipulator class is based on an existing manipulator, you would call that manipulator's Init method:

```
success = self->SomeManipulatorClass::Init(_EXTRA = _extra)
```

where *SomeManipulatorClass* is the class definition file for the manipulator on which your new manipulator is based. The variable `success` contains a 1 if the initialization was successful.

Note

Your manipulator class may have multiple superclasses. In general, each superclass' Init method should be invoked by your class' Init method.

Error Checking

Rather than simply calling the superclass Init method, it is a good idea to check whether the call to the superclass Init method succeeded. The following statement checks the value returned by the superclass Init method. If the returned value is 0 (indicating failure), the current Init method also immediately returns with a value of 0:

```
IF ( self->SomeManipulatorClass::Init(_EXTRA = _extra) EQ 0) THEN
$
    RETURN, 0
```

This convention is used in all manipulator classes included with IDL. RSI strongly suggests that you include similar checks in your own class definition files.

Keywords to the Init Method

Properties of the manipulator class can be set in the Init method by specifying the property names and values as IDL keyword-value pairs. In addition to any keywords implemented directly in the Init method of the superclass on which you base your class, the properties of the IDLitManipulator class, the IDLitMessaging class, and the IDLitComponent class are available to any manipulator class. See [“IDLitManipulator Properties”](#), [“IDLitMessaging Properties”](#), and [“IDLitComponent Properties”](#) in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual.

Note

Always use keyword inheritance (the `_EXTRA` keyword) to pass keyword parameters through to the superclass. (See [“Keyword Inheritance”](#) in Chapter 5 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for details on IDL’s keyword inheritance mechanism.)

Standard Base Class

While you can create your new manipulator class from any existing manipulator class, the manipulator classes you create will usually be subclassed directly from the base class, IDLitManipulator:

```
IF (self->IDLitManipulator::Init(_EXTRA = _extra) EQ 0) $
    THEN RETURN, 0
```

The IDLitManipulator class provides the base iTool functionality used in the manipulator classes created by RSI. See [“Subclassing From the IDLitManipulator Class”](#) on page 207 for details.

Return Value

If all of the routines and methods used in the Init method execute successfully, it should indicate successful initialization by returning 1. Other manipulator classes that subclass from your manipulator class may check this return value, as your routine should check the value returned by any superclass Init methods called.

Example Init Method

The following example code shows a very simple Init method for a manipulator named `ExampleManip`. This function would be included (along with the class structure definition routine and any other methods defined by the class) in a file named `examplemanip__define.pro`.

```
FUNCTION ExampleManip::Init, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

; Initialize the superclass.
IF (self->IDLitManipulator::Init(TYPES=['IDLIMAGE'], $
    NAME='Sample Manipulator', TRANSIENT_DEFAULT=1, $
    OPERATION_IDENTIFIER='SET_PROPERTY', $
    PARAMETER_IDENTIFIER='ALPHA_CHANNEL', $
    _EXTRA = _extra) NE 1) THEN $
    RETURN, 0

; Call a custom method that registers a cursor for this
; manipulator.
self->DoRegisterCursor

; Indicate success.
RETURN, 1

END
```

Discussion

The `ExampleManip` class is based on the `IDLitManipulator` class (discussed in [“Subclassing From the IDLitManipulator Class”](#) on page 207). As a result, all of the standard features of an iTool manipulator are already present. We don’t define any keyword values to be handled explicitly in the Init method, but we do use the keyword inheritance mechanism to pass keyword values through to methods called within the Init method. The `ExampleManip` Init method does the following things:

1. Calls the Init method of the superclass, `IDLitManipulator`. Init method keywords are specified as follows:
 - The `TYPES` keyword indicates the manipulator works on data that has the iTool data type of `IDLIMAGE`. Allowable values for the `TYPES` keyword are those types returned by the `GetTypes` method of `IDLitVisualization`. See [“IDLitVisualization::GetTypes”](#) in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

Note

You can also examine the `IDLitVis*` classes in the `lib/itools/framework` subdirectory of the IDL installation directory.

The TYPE defined during the IDLitVisualization initialization defines the visualization type. See “[Predefined iTool Visualization Classes](#)” on page 115 for the visualization type of each visualization class.

-
- The NAME keyword identifies the manipulator. If the IDENTIFIER keyword is not set, the manipulator’s identifier is created from the name.
 - The TRANSIENT_DEFAULT keyword indicates that this manipulator is transient, and that the default manipulator should be automatically started when this manipulator finishes (on mouse up).
 - If the manipulator is to support undo/redo functionality, you must specify an operation associated with the manipulator as the OPERATION_IDENTIFIER keyword value. If the manipulator modifies a property of an object, set the OPERATION_IDENTIFIER equal to 'SET_PROPERTY', and the PROPERTY_IDENTIFIER keyword equal to the parameter identifier of the property. This example manipulator changes the opacity (ALPHA_CHANNEL) of an image. See “[Manipulators and the Undo/Redo System](#)” on page 202 for more information.
 - The _EXTRA keyword inheritance mechanism passes through any keywords provided when the ExampleManip Init method is called.
2. Calls a method, DoRegisterCursor, that creates a cursor for this manipulator using the IDLitManipulator::RegisterCursor method. See “[Creating a RegisterCursor Method](#)” on page 218 for more information. If you prefer, you can use one of the predefined cursors instead of a custom cursor by setting the DEFAULT_CURSOR property. See the IDLitManipulator property “[DEFAULT_CURSOR](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for a list of predefined cursors. When the mouse cursor is over a visualization of the appropriate type (as defined by the TYPE property), the manipulator cursor is shown.
 3. Returns the integer 1, indicating successful initialization.

The properties that support mouse and keyboard interaction are enabled by default. See “[IDLitManipulator Properties](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

Creating a Cleanup Method

The manipulator class Cleanup method handles any cleanup required by the manipulator object, and should do the following:

- Destroy any pointers or objects created by the manipulator

- Call the superclass' Cleanup method

Calling the superclass' cleanup method will destroy any objects created when the superclass was initialized.

Note

If your manipulator class is based on the `IDLitManipulator` class, and does not create any pointers or objects of its own, the `Cleanup` method is not strictly required. It is always safest, however, to create a `Cleanup` method that calls the superclass' `Cleanup` method.

See “[IDLitManipulator::Cleanup](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example Cleanup Method

The following example code shows a very simple `Cleanup` method for the `ExampleManip` manipulator:

```
PRO ExampleManip::Cleanup

    ; Clean up superclass.
    self->IDLitManipulator::Cleanup

END
```

Discussion

Since our manipulator's instance data does not include any pointers or object references, the `Cleanup` method simply calls the superclass `Cleanup` method.

Creating Mouse Event Methods

Manipulators based on the `IDLitManipulator` class have the ability to respond to mouse events generated by the user. The `OnMouseDown`, `OnMouseMove`, and `OnMouseUp` methods are invoked in response to mouse events in the `iTool` window. The functionality of an interactive manipulator can be divided among these events.

Implementing an `OnMouseDown` Method

The manipulator class `OnMouseDown` method is called when a mouse down event occurs on the target window. Calling the superclass `IDLitManipulator::OnMouseDown` method selects items at the mouse location and fills in the values of the `ButtonPress`, `nSelectionList` and `pSelectionList` instance data fields. See “[Using Manipulator Public Instance Data](#)” on page 204 for

more information on these fields. The x , y window coordinates of the cursor, which button is depressed when the mouse button is clicked, and related information are also provided through method parameters. Details on these method parameter values are provided in “[IDLitManipulator::OnMouseDown](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual.

The actual processing performed by the `OnMouseDown` method depends entirely on the manipulator. If the manipulator action does not rely on mouse movements, the majority of your processing may occur in the `OnMouseDown` method. Regardless, you can use this method to determine if user selections meet requirements, or to set up initial values required for manipulator actions. If your manipulator calls a custom operation or the `SET_PROPERTY` operation, and you want to enable undo/redo support, call the `RecordUndoValues` method in the `OnMouseDown` method to record the initial values. See “[Manipulators and the Undo/Redo System](#)” on page 202 for more information.

Example OnMouseDown Method

The following example code shows a simple `OnMouseDown` method for the `ExampleManip` manipulator. All this method does is set class structure fields.

```
PRO ExampleManip::OnMouseDown, oWin, x, y, iButton, $
    KeyMods, nClicks

; Call our superclass.
self->IDLitManipulator::OnMouseDown, $
    oWin, x, y, iButton, KeyMods, nClicks

; Return if no visualization was selected.
IF (self.nSelectionList EQ 0) THEN $
    RETURN

; Access the first selected item and make sure it is an image.
oImage = (*self.pSelectionList)[0]
IF (OBJ_ISA(oImage, 'IDLitVisImage')) THEN BEGIN
    ; Set the oImage field of the class structure to be
    ; the retrieved IDLitVisImage object.
    self.oImage = oImage

    ; Record the current values for the target objects.
    iStatus = self->RecordUndoValues()
ENDIF
END
```

Discussion — When the `ExampleManip` manipulator is activated and the user clicks in the `iTool` window, the `OnMouseDown` method calls the superclass (in order to update the public instance fields) and makes sure a visualization was selected. If the

selected visualization is an image, store the image in the class structure field created when the ExampleManip class structure is defined. Call the RecordUndoValues method to support undo/redo functionality.

Implementing an OnMouseMotion Method

The manipulator class OnMouseMotion method is called when a mouse motion event occurs over the target window. This method provides access to the window object, the *x*, *y* window coordinates of the cursor, and which modifier key (if any) is depressed during mouse motion. The ButtonPress instance data field can be used to determine whether a button is pressed during mouse motion, or which button is pressed if this level of granularity is needed. See [“Using Manipulator Public Instance Data”](#) on page 204 for details.

Example OnMouseMotion Method

The following example shows elements common in an interactive manipulator’s OnMouseMotion method. For a complete working example, see [“Example: Color Table Manipulator”](#) on page 225.

```

; Configure mouse motion method.
pro ExampleManip::OnMouseMotion, oWin, x, y, KeyMods

; If there is not a valid image, call superclass and return.
IF (~OBJ_VALID(self.oImage)) THEN BEGIN

    ; Call our superclass.
    self->IDLitManipulator::OnMouseMotion, oWin, x, y, KeyMods
    RETURN
ENDIF

; Activate if mouse button is held down.
IF self.ButtonPress NE 0 THEN BEGIN

    ; Manipulate the visualization.
    ; ...

    ; Write manipulator information to the status bar
    ; using inherited IDLitMessaging ProbeStatusMessage method.
    self->ProbeStatusMessage, 'Show user manipulator status'

    ; Update the window to reflect the changes made.
    oWin->Draw
ENDIF

; Call our superclass.
self->IDLitManipulator::OnMouseMotion, oWin, x, y, KeyMods

```

END

Discussion — This `OnMouseMotion` method first verifies that there is a valid image, `oImage`, in the class structure field. If not, call the superclass and return. If the image is valid, make sure a mouse button is pressed during the mouse movement and modify the image in some fashion. The `IDLitIMessaging` class (a superclass of `IDLitManipulator`) provides access to the iTool status bar through the `ProbeStatusMessage` method. Write a simple message, and update the window, which can be accessed through the `OnMouseMotion` `oWin` parameter. Other available parameters include window coordinates of the cursor and modifier keys. See “[IDLitManipulator::OnMouseMotion](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details. Before exiting, call our superclass.

Implementing an `OnMouseUp` Method

The manipulator class `OnMouseUp` method is called when a mouse up event occurs over the target window. The method typically includes a call to the `CommitUndoValues` method to commit the user’s changes during the mouse transaction. (This is only required to support undo/redo functionality. See “[Manipulators and the Undo/Redo System](#)” on page 202 for details.)

Example `OnMouseUp` Method

This `OnMouseUp` method can be used to reset class structure fields and to close transactions.

```

; Configure the mouse up method
PRO ExampleManip::OnMouseUp, oWin, x, y, iButton

IF (OBJ_VALID(self.oImage)) THEN BEGIN
    ; Commit this transaction.
    iStatus = self->CommitUndoValues()
ENDIF

; Reset the structure fields.
self.oImage = OBJ_NEW()

; Call our superclass.
self->IDLitManipulator::OnMouseUp, oWin, x, y, iButton

END

```

Discussion — This example verifies that there is a valid image, `oImage`, in the class structure field. If so, call the `CommitUndoValues`, which in turn calls the `RecordFinalValues` method of the associated operation. Before exiting, call our superclass. This must be done to update the public instance data fields. Other available parameters include window coordinates of the cursor and mouse button

information. See [“IDLitManipulator::OnMouseUp”](#) in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

Creating an OnKeyboard Method

Once a manipulator has been started, and a mouse event has been registered in the *iTool* window, the `OnKeyboard` method can support additional user interaction through keyboard actions. The `OnKeyboard` event often includes execution logic from each of the mouse methods. For example, you will likely need to verify that a visualization has been selected (using the `nSelectionList` and `pSelectionList` instance data fields). If the visualization is the correct type, and the manipulator supports undo/redo functionality, call `RecordUndoValues` prior to modifying the visualization in response to keyboard actions, and call `CommitUndoValues` prior to exiting the method. See [“Manipulators and the Undo/Redo System”](#) on page 202 for details.

The parameters of the `OnKeyboard` method return information about whether a key has been pressed (`Press`). If an ASCII character was selected (`IsASCII`), access the ASCII value (`Character`). If the key was not ASCII, you can return which symbol key was pressed (`KeyValue`). The `OnKeyboard` method also provides access to the window object (`oWin`), and the window coordinates of the cursor (`x`, `y`). See [“IDLitManipulator::OnKeyboard”](#) in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

Example OnKeyboard Method

The following example shows elements common to an `OnKeyboard` method, but not any specific manipulation of a visualization. See [“Example: Color Table Manipulator”](#) on page 225 for a complete example.

```

; Configure the OnKeyboard method.
pro ExampleManip::OnKeyboard, oWin, $
    IsASCII, Character, KeyValue, X, Y, Press, Release, KeyMods

; If current event is not a key press, then return.
IF (~Press) THEN $
    RETURN

; Return if no visualization was selected.
IF (self.nSelectionList EQ 0) THEN $
    RETURN

; Access the first selected item and make sure it is an image.
oImage = (*self.pSelectionList)[0]
IF (OBJ_ISA(oImage, 'IDLitVisImage')) THEN BEGIN
    ; Set the oImage field of the class structure to be

```

```

        ; the retrieved IDLitVisImage object.
        self.oImage = (*self.pSelectionList)[0]
    ENDIF ELSE BEGIN
        RETURN
    ENDELSE

    ; Record the current values for the selected images.
    iStatus = self->RecordUndoValues()

    ; *** Interact with the visualization based upon key press.
    ; ...

    ; Commit this transaction.
    iStatus = self->CommitUndoValues()

    ; Write information to the status bar
    ; using inherited IDLitIMessaging ProbeStatusMessage method.
    self->ProbeStatusMessage, 'Some manipulation information'

    ; Update the window to reflect the changes made.
    oWin->Draw

    END

```

Discussion

The `OnKeyboard` method will customarily contain portions of code from any implemented mouse transaction methods. In this example, if a button press event occurred, access the list of selected items and verify that the first item is an image. If so, call `IDLitManipulator::RecordUndoValues`, as was previously shown in the `OnMouseDown` method. Interact with the visualization as defined in an `OnMouseDown` or `OnMouseMotion` method. After making modifications, call `CommitUndoValues` to commit the transaction to the undo/redo buffer, previously shown in the `OnMouseUp` method. Use the `IDLitIMessaging::ProbeStatusMessage` method to write information to the status bar of the `iTool` and access the `oWin` parameter to update the window, as was previously shown in the `OnMouseMotion` method.

Creating a RegisterCursor Method

It is a useful visual indication to the user that a manipulator has been activated if the cursor changes. You can define a pre-existing cursor for a manipulator using the `DEFAULT_CURSOR` property during initialization as described in “[Example Init Method](#)” on page 211 or using the `SetProperty` method. If none of the predefined cursors suit your needs, you can create a custom cursor by calling a method that

includes the `IDLitManipulator::RegisterCursor` method. Call this method to register a custom cursor when the manipulator is initialized.

The `RegisterCursor` method accepts a 16-element string array of 16 characters each that defines the body, mask area, and hot spot of the cursor. See “[IDLitManipulator::RegisterCursor](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details. This lets you quickly configure a cursor without having to create and reference a separate bitmap file. The manipulator cursor is active when it is over a supported visualization type.

Note

You must set the `DEFAULT` keyword for a custom manipulator cursor when you use the `RegisterCursor` method to override the default system manipulator cursor.

Example DoRegisterCursor Method

The following example shows a custom cursor registration method, `DoRegisterCursor`, which implements the `IDLitManipulator` class `RegisterCursor` method to create a custom cursor. See “[Example: Color Table Manipulator](#)” on page 225 for a complete example.

```

; Create and assign the default cursor for the manipulator.
PRO ExampleManip::DoRegisterCursor

; Define the default cursor for this manipulator.
strArray = [ $
    |                                     | , $
    |                                     | , $
    |                                     | , $
    |                                     | , $
    |                                     | , $
    |                                     | , $
    |          .#.            .#.        | , $
    |    .#.....#..          | , $
    |  .#####.              | , $
    | ###...$.    .###    | , $
    |  .#####.              | , $
    |    .#.....#..          | , $
    |          .#.            .#.        | , $
    |                                     | , $
    |                                     | , $
    |                                     | , $
    |                                     | , $
    |                                     | , $
    |                                     | , $

; Register the new cursor with the tool.
self->RegisterCursor, strArray, 'LUT', /DEFAULT

```

END

Discussion

This `DoRegisterCursor` method defines a 16-element string array of 16 characters each that represents the cursor. The `strArray` contains the following elements:

- the “#” symbols translate into the black areas of the cursor body
- the “.” symbols indicate the white mask area
- the “\$” defines the hot spot, relating to the mouse cursor position when the manipulator is active

Pass the string array and cursor name (the *Name* argument value) to the `RegisterCursor` method. Set the `DEFAULT` keyword to indicate this is the default cursor for this manipulator.

Note

The *Name* argument specified here is the same as that returned by the `GetCursorType` method. See “[IDLitManipulator::GetCursorType](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for more information.

Creating GetProperty or SetProperty Methods

The manipulator class `GetProperty` method retrieves property values from the manipulator object instance or from instance data of other associated objects. It should retrieve the requested property value, either from the manipulator object’s instance data or by calling another class’ `GetProperty` method. See “[IDLitManipulator::GetProperty](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

The manipulator class `SetProperty` method stores property values in the manipulator object’s instance data or in properties of associated objects. It should set the specified property value, either by storing the value directly in the manipulator object’s instance data or by calling another class’ `SetProperty` method. See “[IDLitManipulator::SetProperty](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example GetProperty and SetProperty Methods

The following example code shows a very simple `GetProperty` method for the `ExampleManip` operation:

```
PRO ExampleManip::GetProperty, _REF_EXTRA = _extra
```

```
        ; Get superclass properties.
        IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) GT 0) THEN $
            self->IDLitManipulator::GetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra
        END

        PRO ExampleManip::SetProperty, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

        IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) GT 0) THEN $
            self->IDLitManipulator::SetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra
        END
```

Discussion

The `GetProperty` and `SetProperty` methods first define the keywords they will accept. There must be a keyword for each property of the manipulator type. The keyword inheritance mechanism allows properties to be retrieved from or set on the `ExampleManip` class' superclasses without knowing the names of the properties.

In this example, there are no properties specific to the `ExampleManip` object, so we simply use the `N_ELEMENTS` function to check whether the `_extra` structure contains any elements. If it does, we call the superclass' `GetProperty` and `SetProperty` methods, passing in all of the keywords stored in the `_extra` structure.

Registering a Manipulator

Before a manipulator can be activated by an iTool, the manipulator's class definition must be registered as being available to the iTool. Registering a manipulator with the iTool links the class definition file that contains the actual IDL code that defines the manipulator with a simple string that names the manipulator. Code that defines a manipulator in an iTool uses the name string to specify which manipulation should be performed.

Using IDLitool::RegisterManipulator

In most cases, you will register a manipulator with the iTool in the iTool's class Init method. Registration ensures that the manipulator is available to the iTool. See [“Creating a New iTool Class”](#) on page 91 for details on the iTool class Init method.

To register a manipulator, call the IDLitool::RegisterManipulator method:

```
self->RegisterManipulator, ManipulatorName, Manipulator_Class_Name
```

where *ManipulatorName* is the string you will use when referring to the manipulator, and *Manipulator_Class_Name* is a string that specifies the name of the class file that contains the manipulator's definition.

Note

The file *Manipulator_Class_Name__define.pro* must exist somewhere in IDL's path for the manipulator type to be successfully registered.

See [“IDLitool::RegisterManipulator”](#) in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

Specifying Properties During Manipulator Registration

You can specify any property of the [IDLitManipulator](#), [IDLitMessaging](#), and [IDLitComponent](#) classes when registering a manipulator. The following properties may be of particular interest:

DEFAULT

Set this manipulator as the default manipulator for the iTool. When set, the manipulator is active when the tool is launched.

DESCRIPTION

A string value that briefly describes how to use the manipulator. This string is displayed in the left side of the status bar when the manipulator is activated. See [“Example: Color Table Manipulator”](#) on page 225 for an example.

ICON

A string value giving the name of an icon to be associated with this object. Typically, this property is the name of a bitmap file that is used to represent the manipulator on the toolbar. The location of the icon image file determines how it is specified. If it exists in the `resource/bitmaps` subdirectory of the IDL installation, simply use the name of the file minus the extension. For example, `'crop'` references the Crop tool's associated icon, `crop.bmp`. If the icon image is in the same directory as the tool class definition file, specify the file name, `'crop.bmp'`. See [“Icon Bitmaps”](#) on page 44 for details on how to locate and reference bitmap icon files.

IDENTIFIER

A string that will be used as the identifier of the object. Identifier strings specify where within an iTool's object hierarchy an object is located; this, in turn, may affect whether and where the object is revealed in the iTool's graphical user interface. See [“iTool Object Identifiers”](#) in Chapter 2 of the *iTool Developer's Guide* manual for details about how identifiers are named.

If this property is not specified, then the value of the *ManipulatorName* argument is used as the identifier.

TYPES

A string or an array of strings indicating the types of data that the manipulator can modify. iTools data types are described in [Chapter 3, “Data Management”](#). Set this property to a null string (`' '`) to specify that the manipulator can be applied to all types of data.

Unregistering a Manipulator

If you are creating a new `iTool` from an existing `iTool` class, you may want to remove a manipulator registered for the existing class from your new tool. This can be useful if you have an `iTool` class that implements all of the functionality you need, but which registers a manipulator you don't want included in your `iTool`. Rather than recreating the `iTool` class without the manipulator, you could create your new `iTool` class in such a way that it inherits from the existing `iTool` class, but *unregisters* the unwanted manipulator.

Unregister a manipulator by calling the `IDLitTool::UnregisterManipulator` method in the `Init` method of your `iTool` class:

```
self -> UnregisterManipulator, identifier
```

where *identifier* is the string name used when registering the manipulator.

For example, suppose you are creating a new `iTool` that subclasses from a standard `iTool` that is based on the `IDLitToolbase` class. If you wanted your new tool to behave just like the a standard tool, with the exception that it would not allow text annotations, you could include the following method call in your `iTool`'s `Init` method:

```
self -> UnregisterManipulator, 'Text'
```

To remove all annotation manipulators, include the following:

```
self -> UnregisterManipulator, 'Annotation'
```

Finding the Identifier String

To find the string value used as the *Identifier* argument to the `UnregisterManipulator` method, you can use the `IDLitTool::FindIdentifiers` method. This can be used to return the identifier of each manipulator registered with an active tool when you specify the `MANPULATORS` keyword as follows:

```
; Get the tool reference and all registered manipulator ids.
idtool=ITGETCURRENT(Tool = oTool)
vManip = oTool->FindIdentifiers(/MANPULATORS)
PRINT, vManip
```

An array of values is printed to the Output Log window in the format of:

```
/TOOLS/ToolName/MANPULATORS/ManipulatorName
```

Specify the *ManipulatorName* as the argument to `UnregisterManipulator` method to remove that manipulator from the tool.

Example: Color Table Manipulator

The following example creates a custom manipulator that allows you to interactively change the palette applied to a single-plane image. After activating the manipulator by selecting the Color Table tool icon on the toolbar, position the cursor over the image and with the mouse button held down, move the mouse to the right or left to change the palette.

Example Code

The class definition code for this example `iTool` is included in the file `example3tool__define.pro` in the `examples/doc/itools` subdirectory of the IDL distribution. Enter `example3tool` at the IDL prompt to create an instance of the `iTool`. Open the file in any text editor or enter `.edit example3tool` at the IDLDE prompt to open the `.pro` file in the IDL editor.

A segment of the tool created in this example is shown in the following figure.

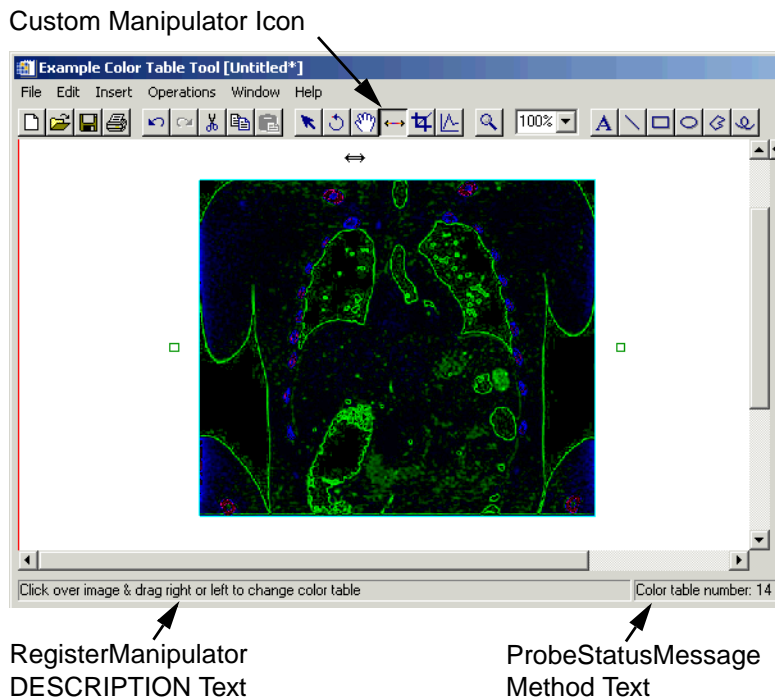


Figure 8-2: Custom `iTool` with Color Table Manipulator

This example creates three files:

- Manipulator Class Definition (`example3_manippalette__define.pro`)— defines the characteristics and actions of the manipulator in response to mouse and keyboard events. See “[Color Table Manipulator Class Definition](#)” below.
- iTool Class Definition (`example3tool__define.pro`)— defines this tool’s inheritance of the `IDLitToolImage` tool and registers the custom manipulator. See “[Custom Tool Class Definition for the Color Table Manipulator](#)” on page 227.
- iTool Launch Routine (`example3tool.pro`)— accepts and initializes any image arguments by creating the necessary data and adding it to the tool’s parameter set. The launch routine registers the tool using `ITREGISTER` and then creates an instance of the tool using `IDLITSYS_CREATETOOL` function. See “[Tool Launch Routine for Custom Color Table Manipulator](#)” on page 227.

Once you have created and compiled the necessary files, see “[Running the Color Table Manipulator Example](#)” on page 228 for instructions on how to recreate the display shown in the previous figure.

Color Table Manipulator Class Definition

Define the color table manipulator (`example3_manippalette__define.pro`). This class definition file initializes the manipulator, creates a cursor, and defines the manipulator actions in response to mouse and keyboard events.

Example Code

The class definition code for this example manipulator is included in the file `example3_manippalette__define.pro` in the `examples/doc/itools` subdirectory of the IDL distribution. Enter

```
example3tool
```

at the IDL prompt to create an instance of the iTool. Open the file in any text editor or enter

```
.edit example3_manippalette__define
```

at the IDLDE prompt to open the manipulator `.pro` file in the IDL editor.

Custom Tool Class Definition for the Color Table Manipulator

Create the class definition for the tool containing the custom manipulator (example3tool__define.pro). This example inherits the IDLitToolImage class functionality. In the tool initialization, register the custom manipulator. The DESCRIPTION string appears in the status area when the manipulator is activated.

Example Code

The class definition code for this example tool is included in the file example3tool__define.pro in the examples/doc/itools subdirectory of the IDL distribution. Enter

```
example3tool
```

at the IDL prompt to create an instance of the iTool. Open the file in any text editor or enter

```
.edit example3tool__define
```

at the IDLDE prompt to open the .pro file in the IDL editor.

Tool Launch Routine for Custom Color Table Manipulator

Create a launch routine (example3tool.pro) for the tool containing the custom color table manipulator. Create an IDLImagePixels type of IDLitData object if the user initializes the tool with a data argument.

Example Code

The class definition code for this example manipulator is included in the file example3_manippalette__define.pro in the examples/doc/itools subdirectory of the IDL distribution. Enter

```
example3tool
```

at the IDL prompt to create an instance of the iTool. Open the file in any text editor or enter

```
.edit example3tool
```

at the IDLDE prompt to open the .pro file in the IDL editor.

Running the Color Table Manipulator Example

Save and compile all of the files. Enter the following at the command line to reproduce the display shown in “[Example: Color Table Manipulator](#)” on page 225.

```
ctboneFile = FILEPATH('ctbone157.jpg', $
    SUBDIRECTORY = ['examples', 'data'])
READ_JPEG, ctboneFile, ctboneImg

; Launch the example tool with the input data.
example3tool, ctboneImg
```

Select the Color Table tool on the toolbar and move the cursor over the image. Hold down the left-mouse button and drag the cursor to the right and left to scroll through the available color tables. You can also use the right and left arrow keys to modify the color table value.



Chapter 9

Creating a File Reader

This chapter describes the process of creating an iTool file reader.

| | | | |
|--|-----|---|-----|
| Overview of iTool File Readers | 230 | Registering a File Reader | 245 |
| Predefined iTool File Readers | 231 | Unregistering a File Reader | 246 |
| Creating a New File Reader | 234 | Example: TIFF File Reader | 248 |

Overview of iTool File Readers

A *file reader* is an iTool component object class that defines how data stored in a file should be imported into the iTool environment. File readers have mechanisms for determining the type of data stored in a file, which allows them to create IDLitData objects from the stored data. Some file readers implement a graphical user interface allowing the user to specify the format of data before importing into the iTool; others read a well-defined file type and operate more or less automatically. Some examples of iTool file readers are:

- the ASCII file reader, which uses the IDL ASCII_TEMPLATE and READ_ASCII functions to allow the user to define the format of data in a text file,
- various image file readers, which allow the user to import data stored in JPEG, BMP, PNG, and other well-defined image format files,
- a generic binary file reader, which allows the user to specify the format of files containing binary data.

A number of standard file readers are predefined and included in the IDL iTools package as described in [“Predefined iTool File Readers”](#) on page 231.

The File Reader Creation Process

To create a new iTool file reader, you will do the following:

- Choose an iTool file reader class on which your new operation will be based. In almost all cases, you will base your new operation on the IDLitReader class, which handles registration of standard file properties and provides standard messaging features.
- Provide methods to check the type of data stored in the file and place the retrieved data in a data object.
- Set data object properties.

[This chapter](#) describes the process of creating a new file reader based on the IDLitReader class.

Predefined iTool File Readers

The iTool system distributed with IDL includes a number of predefined file readers. You can include these file readers in an iTool directly by registering the class with your iTool (as described in “[Registering a File Reader](#)” on page 245). You can also create a new file reader class based on one of the predefined classes.

IDLitReadASCII

The iTools ASCII file reader uses the IDL `READ_ASCII` and `ASCII_TEMPLATE` functions to read data from an ASCII file into an IDL variable or variables. It presents a *wizard* interface that allows the user to define the structure of the data in the ASCII file and specify which data should be included.

Registered Properties

None

IDLitReadBinary

The iTools Binary file reader uses the IDL `READ_BINARY` and `BINARY_TEMPLATE` functions to read data from a binary data file into an IDL variable or variables. It presents a *wizard* interface that allows the user to define the structure of the data in the binary file and specify which data should be included.

Registered Properties

TEMPLATE — A template structure (previously defined by the `BINARY_TEMPLATE` function) describing the file to be read.

IDLitReadBMP

The iTools BMP file reader uses the IDL `READ_BMP` function to read a `*.bmp` file and place the image data in an iTool image data object.

Registered Properties

None

IDLitReadDICOM

The iTools DICOM reader uses the IDL `READ_DICOM` function to read a `*.dcm` and place the image data in an iTool image data object.

Registered Properties

None

IDLitReadISV

The iTools Saved Variables file reader restores a saved iTool state (*.isv) file. All data objects in the file are placed into the current iTool data manager session, and all visualization objects are restored and displayed.

Registered Properties

None

IDLitReadJPEG

The iTools JPEG file reader uses the IDL READ_JPEG procedure to read a *.jpg or *.jpeg file and place the image data in an iTool image data object.

Registered Properties

None

IDLitReadJPEG2000

The iTools JPEG 2000 file reader uses the IDL READ_JPEG2000 procedure to read a *.jp2, *.jpx, or *.j2k file and place the image data in an iTool image data object.

Registered Properties

DISCARD_LEVELS — An integer specifying the number of highest resolution levels which will not appear in the result. See the DISCARD_LEVELS keyword to the IDLffJPEG2000::GetData method for additional details.

QUALITY_LAYERS — An integer specifying the maximum number of quality layers which will be returned in the result. Each layer contains the information required to represent the image at a higher quality, given the information from all the previous layers. See the MAX_LAYERS keyword to the IDLffJPEG2000::GetData method for additional details.

IDLitReadPICT

The iTools PICT file reader uses the IDL READ_PICT procedure to read a *.pct or *.pict file and place the image data in an iTool image data object.

Registered Properties

None

IDLitReadPNG

The iTools PNG file reader uses the IDL READ_PNG function to read a *.png file and place the image (and, optionally, palette) data in an iTool image data object.

Registered Properties

None

IDLitReadShapefile

The iTools Shapefile reader uses the IDLffShape object to read an ESRI shapefile and place the polygons or polylines in an iTool image data object.

Registered Properties

ATTRIBUTE_NAME — The name of an attribute of the shapefile that contains the name of the individual item *within* the shapefile.

COMBINE_ALL — A boolean value specifying whether all shapes contained in the shapefile should be combined into a single visualization in the iTool.

IDLitReadTIFF

The iTools TIFF file reader uses the IDL READ_TIFF function to read a *.tif or *.tiff file and place the image (and, optionally, palette) data in an iTool image data object.

Registered Properties

IMAGE_INDEX — An integer specifying the index of the image within the TIFF file that should be read into the image data object.

IMAGE_STACKING — An integer specifying the stacking order for reading multi-image TIFF files into volumes.

IDLitReadWAV

The iTools WAV file reader uses the IDL READ_WAV function to read a *.wav file and place the data in an iTool vector object.

Registered Properties

None

Creating a New File Reader

An iTool file reader class definition file must (at the least) provide methods to initialize the file reader class, get and set property values, handle changes to the underlying data, clean up when the file reader is destroyed, and define the file reader class structure. Complex file reader types will likely provide additional methods.

The process of creating an file reader is outlined in the following sections:

- [“Creating the Class Structure Definition”](#) on page 234
- [“Creating an Init Method”](#) on page 235
- [“Creating a Cleanup Method”](#) on page 240
- [“Creating a GetProperty Method”](#) on page 240
- [“Creating a SetProperty Method”](#) on page 241
- [“Creating an IsA Method”](#) on page 242
- [“Creating a GetData Method”](#) on page 243

Creating the Class Structure Definition

When any IDL object is created, IDL looks for an IDL class structure definition that specifies the instance data fields needed by an instance of the object, along with the data types of those fields. The object class structure must have been defined *before* any objects of the type are created. In practice, when the IDL OBJ_NEW function attempts to create an instance of a specified object class, it executes a procedure named *ObjectClass__define* (where *ObjectClass* is the name of the object), which is expected to define an IDL structure variable with the correct name and structure fields. For additional information on how IDL creates object instances, see [“The Object Lifecycle”](#) in Chapter 13 of the *Object Programming* manual.

Note

The class structure definition is generally the last routine in the `.pro` file that defines an object class.

Subclassing from the IDLitReader Class

The IDLitReader class is the base class for all iTool file readers. In almost all cases, new file readers will be subclassed either from the IDLitReader class or from a class that is a subclass of IDLitReader.

See “[IDLitReader](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details on the methods and properties available to classes that subclass from `IDLitReader`.

Example Class Structure Definition

The following is the class structure definition for the `ExampleReader` file reader class. This procedure should be the last procedure in a file named `examplerreader__define.pro`.

```
PRO ExampleReader__Define

    struct = { ExampleReader,          $
              INHERITS IDLitReader $
            }

END
```

Discussion

The purpose of the structure definition routine is to define a named IDL structure with structure fields that will contain the visualization object instance data. The structure name should be the same as the visualization’s class name — in this case, `ExampleReader`.

Like many `iTool` file reader classes, `ExampleReader` is created as a subclass of the `IDLitReader` class. File reader classes that subclass from `IDLitReader` class inherit all of the standard `iTool` file reader features, as described in “[Subclassing from the IDLitReader Class](#)” on page 234.

The `ExampleReader` class has no instance data of its own. For a more complex example, see “[Example: TIFF File Reader](#)” on page 248.

Creating an Init Method

The file reader class `Init` method handles any initialization required by the file reader object, and should do the following:

- define the `Init` function method, using the keyword inheritance mechanism to handle “extra” keywords
- call the `Init` methods of any superclasses, using the keyword inheritance mechanism to pass “extra” keywords
- register any properties of your file reader, and set property attributes as necessary
- perform other initialization steps as necessary

- return the value 1 if the initialization steps are successful, or 0 otherwise

Definition of the Init Function

Begin by defining the argument and keyword list for your Init method. The argument and keyword list defines positional parameters (arguments) accepted by your method, defines any keywords that will be handled directly by your method, and specifies whether keywords not explicitly handled by your method will be passed through to other routines called by your method via IDL's keyword inheritance mechanism. The function signature for an Init method for a file reader generally looks something like this:

```
FUNCTION MyReader::Init, MYKEYWORD1 = mykeyword1, $
    MYKEYWORD2 = mykeyword2, ..., _REF_EXTRA = _extra
```

where *MyReader* is the name of your file reader class and the *MYKEYWORD* parameters are keywords handled explicitly by your Init function.

Note

Always use keyword inheritance (the `_REF_EXTRA` keyword) to pass keyword parameters through to any called routines. (See “[Keyword Inheritance](#)” in Chapter 5 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for details on IDL's keyword inheritance mechanism.)

Superclass Initialization

The file reader class Init method should call the Init method of any required superclass. For example, if your file reader is based on an existing file reader class, you would call that class' Init method:

```
success = self->SomeFileReaderClass::Init(_EXTRA = _extra)
```

where *SomeFileReaderClass* is the class definition file for the file reader on which your new file reader is based. The variable `success` will contain a 1 if the initialization was successful.

Note

Your file reader class may have multiple superclasses. In general, each superclass' Init method should be invoked by your class' Init method.

Error Checking

Rather than simply calling the superclass Init method, it is a good idea to check whether the call to the superclass Init method succeeded. The following statement checks the value returned by the superclass Init method; if the returned value is 0

(indicating failure), the current Init method also immediately returns with a value of 0:

```
IF (self->SomeFileReaderClass::Init(_EXTRA = _extra) EQ 0) THEN $
    RETURN, 0
```

This convention is used in all file reader classes included with IDL. RSI strongly suggests that you include similar checks in your own class definition files.

Keywords to the Init Method

Properties of the file reader class can be set in the Init method by specifying the property names and values as IDL keyword-value pairs. In addition to any keywords implemented directly in the Init method of the superclass on which you base your class, the properties of the IDLitReader class and the IDLitComponent class are available to any file reader class. See “[IDLitReader Properties](#)” and “[IDLitComponent Properties](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual.

Note

Always use keyword inheritance (the `_EXTRA` keyword) to pass keyword parameters through to the superclass. (See “[Keyword Inheritance](#)” in Chapter 5 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for details on IDL’s keyword inheritance mechanism.)

Standard Base Class

While you can create your new file reader class from any existing file reader class, in many cases, file reader classes you create will be subclassed directly from the base class IDLitReader:

```
IF (self->IDLitReader::Init(Extensions, _EXTRA = _extra) EQ 0) $
    THEN RETURN, 0
```

where *Extensions* is a string or array of strings specifying the filename extensions readable by your file reader.

Note

The value of the *Extensions* argument is used only to display the proper filename filter when an Open dialog is displayed — it is not a check for the proper filetype. The IsA method must check the file to determine whether it is readable by your file reader.

The IDLitReader class provides the base iTool file reader functionality used in the tools created by RSI. See “[Subclassing from the IDLitReader Class](#)” on page 234 for details.

Return Value

If all of the routines and methods used in the `Init` method execute successfully, it should indicate successful initialization by returning 1. Other file reader classes that subclass from your file reader class may check this return value, as your routine should check the value returned by any superclass `Init` methods called.

Registering Properties

File reader objects can register properties with the iTool. Registered properties show up in the property sheet interface shown in the *system preferences browser* (described in “[Properties of the iTools System](#)” on page 85), and can be modified interactively by users. The iTool property interface is described in detail in [Chapter 4, “Property Management”](#).

Register a property by calling the `RegisterProperty` method of the `IDLitComponent` class:

```
self->RegisterProperty, PropertyIdentifier [, TypeCode] $  
    [, ATTRIBUTE = value]
```

where *PropertyIdentifier* is a string that uniquely identifies the property, *TypeCode* is an integer between 0 and 9 specifying the property data type, and *ATTRIBUTE* is a property attribute. See “[Registering Properties](#)” on page 74 for details.

Note

A file reader need not register any properties at all, if the read operation is simple. Many of the standard iTool image file readers work without registering any properties.

Setting Property Attributes

If a property has already been registered, perhaps by a superclass of your file reader class, you can change the registered attribute values using the `SetPropertyAttribute` method of the `IDLitComponent` class:

```
self->SetPropertyAttribute, Identifier
```

where *Identifier* is the name of the keyword to the `GetProperty` and `SetProperty` methods used to retrieve or change the value of this property. The *Identifier* is specified in the call to `RegisterProperty` either via the *PropertyName* argument or the `IDENTIFIER` keyword. See “[Property Attributes](#)” on page 78 for additional details.

Passing Through Caller-Supplied Property Settings

If you have included the `_REF_EXTRA` keyword in your function definition, you can use IDL's keyword inheritance mechanism to pass any “extra” keyword values included in the call to the `Init` method through to other routines. This mechanism allows you to specify property settings when the `Init` method is called; simply include each property's keyword/value pair when calling the `Init` method, and include the following in the body of the `Init` method:

```
IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) GT 0) THEN $
    self->MyReader::SetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra
```

where `MyReader` is the name of your file reader class. This line has the effect of passing any “extra” keyword values to your file reader class' `SetProperty` method, where they can either be handled directly or passed through to the `SetProperty` methods of the superclasses of your class. See [“Creating a SetProperty Method”](#) on page 241 for details.

Example Init Method

```
FUNCTION ExampleReader::Init, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

    IF (self->IDLitReader::Init('ppm', $
        DESCRIPTION="PPM File Reader", $
        _EXTRA = _extra) EQ 0) THEN $
        RETURN, 0

    RETURN, 1

END
```

Discussion

The `ExampleReader` class is based on the `IDLitReader` class (discussed in [“Subclassing from the IDLitReader Class”](#) on page 234). As a result, all of the standard features of an `iTool` file reader class are already present. We don't define any keyword values to be handled explicitly in the `Init` method, but we do use the keyword inheritance mechanism to pass keyword values through to methods called within the `Init` method. The `ExampleReader` `Init` method does the following things:

1. Calls the `Init` method of the superclass, `IDLitReader`. We specify a list of accepted filename extensions (only `ppm`, in this case) via the `Extensions` argument. We include a description of the reader via the `DESCRIPTION` keyword. Finally, we use the `_EXTRA` keyword inheritance mechanism to pass through any keywords provided when the `ExampleReader` `Init` method is called.

2. Returns the integer 1, indicating successful initialization.

Creating a Cleanup Method

The file reader class Cleanup method handles any cleanup required by the file reader object, and should do the following:

- destroy any pointers or objects created by the file reader
- call the superclass' Cleanup method

Calling the superclass' cleanup method will destroy any objects created when the superclass was initialized.

Note

If your file reader class is based on the IDLitReader class, and does not create any pointers or objects of its own, the Cleanup method is not strictly required. It is always safest, however, to create a Cleanup method that calls the superclass' Cleanup method.

See “IDLitReader::Cleanup” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example Cleanup Method

```
PRO ExampleReader::Cleanup

    ; Clean up superclass
    self->IDLitReader::Cleanup

END
```

Discussion

Since our file reader object does not have any instance data of its own, the Cleanup method simply calls the superclass Cleanup method.

Creating a GetProperty Method

The file reader class GetProperty method retrieves property values from the file reader object instance or from instance data of other associated objects. It should retrieve the requested property value, either from the file reader object's instance data or by calling another class' GetProperty method.

Note

Any property registered with a call to the `RegisterProperty` method must be listed as a keyword to the `GetProperty` method either of the visualization class or one of its superclasses.

Note

A file reader need not register any properties at all, if the read operation is simple. Many of the standard iTool image file readers work without registering any properties.

See “[IDLitReader::GetProperty](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example GetProperty Method

```
PRO ExampleReader::GetProperty, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

    IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) GT 0) THEN $
        self->IDLitReader::GetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra

END
```

Discussion

The `GetProperty` method first defines the keywords it will accept. There must be a keyword for each property of the file reader. Since the file reader we are creating has no properties of its own, there are no keywords explicitly defined. The keyword inheritance mechanism allows properties to be retrieved from the `ExampleReader` class’ superclasses without knowing the names of the properties.

Since our `ExampleReader` class has no properties of its own, we simply call the superclass’ `GetProperty` method, passing in all of the keywords stored in the `_extra` structure.

Creating a SetProperty Method

The file reader `SetProperty` method stores property values in the file reader object’s instance data. It should set the specified property value, either by storing the value directly in the visualization object’s instance data or by calling another class’ `SetProperty` method.

Note

Any property registered with a call to the RegisterProperty method must be listed as a keyword to the SetProperty method either of the visualization class or one of its superclasses.

Note

A file reader need not register any properties at all, if the read operation is simple. Many of the standard iTool image file readers work without registering any properties.

See “[IDLitReader::SetProperty](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example SetProperty Method

```
PRO ExampleReader::SetProperty, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

  IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) GT 0) THEN $
    self->IDLitReader::SetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra

END
```

Discussion

The SetProperty method first defines the keywords it will accept. There must be a keyword for each property of the visualization type. Since the file reader we are creating has no properties of its own, no keywords are explicitly defined. The keyword inheritance mechanism allows properties to be set on the ExampleReader class’ superclasses without knowing the names of the properties.

Using the N_ELEMENTS function, we check to see whether any properties were specified via the keyword inheritance mechanism. If any keywords were specified, we call the superclass’ SetProperty method, passing in all of the keywords stored in the _extra structure.

Creating an IsA Method

The file reader IsA method must accept a string containing the name of the file to be read as its only parameter, and must determine whether the file is of the proper type to be read by your file reader. If the file is of the correct type, the IsA method must return 1; if the file is not of the correct type, the IsA method should display an error message and return 0.

See “[IDLitReader::IsA](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example IsA Method

```

FUNCTION ExampleReader::IsA, strFilename

    iDot = STRPOS(strFilename, '.', /REVERSE_SEARCH)

    IF (iDot GT 0) THEN BEGIN
        fileSuffix = STRUPCASE(STRMID(strFilename, iDot + 1))
        IF (STRUPCASE(fileSuffix) EQ 'PPM') THEN RETURN, 1
    ENDIF

    self->IDLitIMessaging::ErrorMessage, $
        ["The specified file is not a PPM file."], $
        SEVERITY = 0, TITLE="Wrong File Type"

    RETURN, 0

END

```

Discussion

Note

Our example IsA method will simply check the filename for the presence of the proper filename extension. A more sophisticated IsA method would actually inspect the contents of the specified file.

The IsA method accepts a string that contains a file name. Using the supplied file name, we first search backwards from the end of the name until we locate a dot character. If the filename contains a dot, we extract the string that follows the dot and convert it to upper case. If the extracted string is 'PPM', we return success; if the extracted string is not 'PPM' or if there is no dot in the file name, we issue an error using the `IDLitIMessaging::ErrorMessage` method and return failure.

Creating a GetData Method

The file reader `GetData` method does the work of the file reader, first creating an IDL variable or variables to contain the data read from the file, then placing the data into an `iTool` data object. If this process is successful, the `GetData` method must place the created data object in the variable supplied as the method's only argument and return 1 for success. If the process is not successful, the `GetData` method must return 0.

See “[IDLitReader::GetData](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example GetData Method

```

FUNCTION ExampleReader::GetData, oImageData

    ; Get the name of the file currently associated with the reader.
    filename = self->GetFilename()

    ; Read the file.
    READ_PPM, filename, image

    ; Store image data in Image Data object.
    oImageData = OBJ_NEW('IDLitDataIDLImage', $
        NAME = FILE_BASENAME(fileName))

    IF OBJ_VALID(oImageData) THEN BEGIN
        RETURN, oImageData->SetData(image, 'ImagePixels', /NO_COPY)
    ENDIF

    RETURN, 0

END

```

Discussion

The `GetData` method accepts a single argument, which is a named variable that will contain the data object. Our `GetData` method's first step is to retrieve the file name of the file on which the method is being called using the `GetFilename` method. Since our example file reader reads data from PPM files, the file name is then passed to the IDL `READ_PPM` procedure. An `IDLitDataIDLImage` object that will hold the image data is created in the named variable specified by the argument to the `GetData` method (`oImageData`, in this case); the `NAME` property set to the filename of the original data file. We check to ensure that the `oImageData` object was created successfully and add the image data returned by the `READ_PPM` procedure using the `IDLitData::SetData` method. Note the use of the `NO_COPY` keyword to prevent making copies of the image data array, which could be quite large. Finally, we return the value returned by the `SetData` method (1 for success, 0 for failure), or we return 0 if `oImageData` is not a valid object.

Note

The type of data object created (`IDLitDataIDLImage`, in this example) affects how a particular tool will behave when reading the file. If the data type of the object returned by the file reader matches one of the data types specified for a parameter of the visualization being created, the data object is associated with that parameter. See [“Data Type Matching”](#) on page 63 for additional information.

Registering a File Reader

Before a file reader can be used by an iTool to read in a file, the file reader's class definition must be registered as being available to the iTool. Registering a file reader with the iTool links the class definition file that contains the actual IDL code that defines the file reader with a simple string that names the reader. Code that calls a file reader in an iTool uses the name string to specify which reader should be created.

Using IDLitTool::RegisterFileReader

In most cases, you will register a file reader with the iTool in the iTool's class Init method. Registration ensures that the file reader is available when the iTool attempts to use it to read a file. (See “[Creating a New iTool Class](#)” on page 91 for details on the iTool class Init method.)

To register a file reader, call the IDLitTool::RegisterFileReader method:

```
self->RegisterFileReader, Reader_Type, ReaderType_Class_Name, $  
    ICON = icon
```

where *Reader_Type* is the string you will use when referring to the file reader, *ReaderType_Class_Name* is a string that specifies the name of the class file that contains the file reader's definition, and *icon* is a string containing the name of a bitmap file to be used in the preferences browser.

Note

The file *ReaderType_Class_Name__define.pro* must exist somewhere in IDL's path for the file reader to be successfully registered.

See “[IDLitTool::RegisterFileReader](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

Specifying Useful Properties

You can set any property of the [IDLitReader](#) and [IDLitComponent](#) classes when registering a file reader. The following properties may be of particular interest:

ICON

A string value giving the name of an icon to be associated with this object. Typically, this property is the name of a bitmap file to be used when displaying the object in a tree view. See “[Icon Bitmaps](#)” on page 44 for details on where bitmap icon files are located.

Unregistering a File Reader

If you are creating a new `iTool` from an existing `iTool` class, you may want to remove a file reader registered for the existing class from your new tool. This can be useful if you have an `iTool` class that implements all of the functionality you need, but which registers a file reader you don't want included in your `iTool`. Rather than recreating the `iTool` class to remove the file reader, you could create your new `iTool` class in such a way that it inherits from the existing `iTool` class, but *unregisters* the unwanted file reader.

Unregister a file reader by calling the `IDLitTool::UnregisterFileReader` method in the `Init` method of your `iTool` class:

```
self->UnregisterFileReader, identifier
```

where *identifier* is the string name used when registering the file reader.

For example, suppose you are creating a new `iTool` that subclasses from a standard `iTool` that is based on the `IDLitToolbase` class. If you wanted your new tool to behave just like the a standard tool, with the exception that it would not read PNG files, you could include the following method call in your `iTool`'s `Init` method:

```
self->UnregisterFileReader, 'PNG File Reader'
```

Finding the Identifier String

To find the string value used as the *identifier* parameter to the `UnregisterFileReader` method, you can inspect the class file that registers the file reader (if the file reader is registered by a user-created class), or use the `FindIdentifiers` method of the `IDLitTool` object to generate a list of registered file readers. (Standard `iTool` file readers are pre-registered within the `iTool` framework.)

If the file reader is registered in a user-created class, you could inspect the class definition file to find a call to the `RegisterFileReader` method, which looks something like this:

```
self->RegisterFileReader, 'PNG File Reader', 'IDLitReadPNG'
```

The first argument to the `RegisterFileReader` method ('PNG File Reader') is the string name of the file reader.

Alternatively, to generate a list of relative identifiers for all file readers registered with the current tool, use the following statements:

```
void = ITGETCURRENT(TOOL=oTool)
frlist = oTool->FindIdentifiers(/FILE_READERS)
FOR i = 0, N_ELEMENTS(frlist)-1 DO PRINT, $
```

```
STRMID(frlist[i], STRPOS(frlist[i], '/', /REVERSE_SEARCH)+1)
```

See “[IDLitTool::FindIdentifiers](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

Example: TIFF File Reader

This example creates a file reader to read TIFF format files.

Example Code

The code for this example file reader is included in the file `example1_readtiff__define.pro` in the `examples/doc/itools` subdirectory of the IDL distribution. Enter

```
example1tool
```

at the IDL prompt to create an instance of an `iTool` that registers this file reader. Open the file in any text editor or enter

```
.edit example1_readtiff__define
```

at the IDLDE prompt to open the `.pro` file in the IDL editor.

Note

The standard TIFF file reader included with the `iTools` contains additional features not included in this example. In most cases, if a file reader is included in the standard `iTool` distribution, there is no need to create your own reader for files of the same type.

Class Definition File

The class definition for `example1_readtiff` consists of an `Init` method, an `IsA` method, a `GetData` method, `GetProperty` and `SetProperty` methods, and a class structure definition routine. As with all object class definition files, the class structure definition routine is the last routine in the file, and the file is given the same name as the class definition routine (with the suffix `.pro` appended).

Class Definition

```
PRO example1_readtiff__Define

    struct = {example1_readtiff,          $
              inherits IDLitReader,    $
              _index : 0                $
            }

END
```


Discussion

Our class definition routine is very simple. We create an IDL structure variable with the name `example1_readtiff`, specifying that the structure inherits from the `IDLitReader` class. The structure has a single instance data field named `_index`, which we specify as an integer value.

Init Method

```

FUNCTION example1_readtiff::Init, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

; Call the superclass Init method
IF (self->IDLitReader::Init(["tiff", "tif"], $
    NAME="Tiff Files", $
    DESCRIPTION="TIFF File format", $
    _EXTRA = _extra) NE 1) THEN $
RETURN, 0

; Initialize the instance data field
self._index = 0

; Register the index property
self->RegisterProperty, 'IMAGE_INDEX', /INTEGER, $
    Description='Index of the image to read from the TIFF file.'

RETURN, 1

END

```

Discussion

The first item in our class definition file is the `Init` method. The `Init` method's function signature is defined first, using the class name `example1_readtiff`. The `_REF_EXTRA` keyword inheritance mechanism allows any keywords specified in a call to the `Init` method to be passed through to routines that are called within the `Init` method even if we do not know the names of those keywords in advance.

Next, we call the `Init` method of the superclass. In this case, we are creating a subclass of the `IDLitReader` class; this provides us with all of the standard `iTool` file reader functionality automatically. Any “extra” keywords specified in the call to our `Init` method are passed to the `IDLitReader::Init` method via the keyword inheritance mechanism.

We specify a list of accepted filename extensions (`tiff` and `tif`, in this case) via the *Extensions* argument. We specify a value for the `NAME` property of the reader object (this is displayed in the system preferences dialog) and include a description of the reader via the `DESCRIPTION` keyword. Finally, we use the `_EXTRA` keyword

inheritance mechanism to pass through any keywords provided when the `Init` method is called.

Our TIFF reader object has a single instance data field: `_index`, which is used to store the index number of the image to read from a multi-image TIFF file. We initialize this instance data field to 0, and register the `IMAGE_INDEX` property to provide access to this field via the property sheet interface.

Finally, we return the value 1 to indicate successful initialization.

IsA Method

```
FUNCTION example1_readtiff::Isa, strFilename

    RETURN, QUERY_TIFF(strFilename)

END
```

Discussion

The `IsA` method for our TIFF file reader is simple: we use the IDL `QUERY_TIFF` function to determine whether the specified file is a TIFF file, returning the function's return value.

GetData Method

```
FUNCTION example1_readtiff::GetData, oImageData

    filename = self->GetFilename()

    IF (QUERY_TIFF(filename, fInfo, IMAGE_INDEX=self._index) EQ 0) $
        THEN RETURN, 0

    IF (fInfo.has_palette) THEN BEGIN
        image = READ_TIFF(filename, palRed, palGreen, palBlue, $
            IMAGE_INDEX = self._index)
    ENDIF ELSE BEGIN
        image = READ_TIFF(filename, IMAGE_INDEX = self._index)
    ENDELSE

    ; Store image data in Image Data object.
    oImageData = OBJ_NEW('IDLitDataIDLImage', $
        NAME = FILE_BASENAME(fileName))

    result = oImageData->SetData(image, 'ImagePixels', /NO_COPY)

    IF (result EQ 0) THEN $
        RETURN, 0
```

```

; Store palette data in Image Data object.
IF (fInfo.has_palette) THEN $
    result = oImageData->SetData( TRANSPOSE([[palRed], $
        [palGreen], [palBlue]]), 'Palette')

IF fInfo.num_images GT 1 THEN $
    self->IDLitIMessaging::StatusMessage, $
        'Read channel ' + strtrim(self._index,2)

RETURN, result

END

```

Discussion

The `GetData` method for our TIFF file reader begins by retrieving the name of the file associated with the reader object. We then use the `IDL_QUERY_TIFF` function to check whether the image specified by the value of the `IMAGE_INDEX` property (stored in the `_index` instance data field) exists, returning 0 for failure if the specified image does not exist.

`QUERY_TIFF` also returns a structure containing information about the image; we use this structure to determine whether the image has a palette. We use the presence of a palette to choose the correct call to the `READ_TIFF` function, which places the image data in a set of local variables.

Next, we construct an `IDLitDataIDLImage` object to store the image data, using the base name of the image file for the object's `NAME` property. We use the `SetData` method to place the image data into the newly created image data object, specifying the string `'Image'` as the data object's identifier. A check of the return value from the `SetData` method allows us to return 0 from our `GetData` method if we are unable to store the image data in the image object for any reason.

If the image includes palette data, we store the array of red, green, and blue values using the `SetData` method, specifying `'Palette'` as the identifier. The palette variables returned by `READ_TIFF` represent image *planes*; since the `IDLitVisImage` visualization type that we will use to display the image expects data interleaved by pixel, we use the `TRANSPOSE` function to convert the palette data into the correct format.

Finally, we use the `StatusMessage` method of the `IDLitIMessaging` class to report to the user which image was retrieved from the TIFF file. The message is displayed in the status area of the `iTool` window.

GetProperty Method

```

PRO example1_readtiff::GetProperty, IMAGE_INDEX = image_index, $

```

```

_REF_EXTRA = _extra

IF (ARG_PRESENT(image_index)) THEN $
    image_index = self._index

IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) GT 0) THEN $
    self->IDLitReader::GetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra

END

```

Discussion

The `GetProperty` method for our TIFF file reader supports a single property named `IMAGE_INDEX`. If this property is specified in the call to the `GetProperty` method, its value is retrieved from the `_index` instance data field. Any other properties included in the method call are passed to the superclass' `GetProperty` method.

SetProperty Method

```

PRO example1_readtiff::SetProperty, IMAGE_INDEX = image_index, $
    _REF_EXTRA = _extra

IF (N_ELEMENTS(image_index) GT 0) THEN $
    self._index = image_index

IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) GT 0) THEN $
    self->IDLitReader::SetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra

END

```

Discussion

The `SetProperty` method for our TIFF file reader supports a single property named `IMAGE_INDEX`. If this property is specified in the call to the `SetProperty` method, its value is placed in the `_index` instance data field. Any other properties included in the method call are passed to the superclass' `SetProperty` method.



Chapter 10

Creating a File Writer

This chapter describes the process of creating an iTool file writer.

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|--|-----|---|-----|
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| Predefined iTool File Writers | 255 | Unregistering a File Writer | 271 |
| Creating a New File Writer | 258 | Example: TIFF File Writer | 273 |

Overview of iTool File Writers

A *file writer* is an iTool component object class that defines how data stored in the iTool data manager can be exported to a file. File writers have mechanisms for manipulating data stored in iTool data objects into the proper format for a given file type. Some examples of iTool file writers are:

- the ASCII file writer, which uses the IDL PRINTF procedure to write data to a text file.
- various image file writers, which allow the user to save data in JPEG, BMP, PNG, and other well-defined image format files,
- a generic binary file writer, which uses the IDL WRITEU procedure to write unformatted binary data to a file.

A number of standard file writers are predefined and included in the IDL iTools package; if none of the predefined file writers suits your needs, you can create your own file writer by subclassing either from the base IDLitWriter class on which all of the predefined file writers are based, or from one of the predefined file writers.

The File Writer Creation Process

To create a new iTool file writer, you will do the following:

- Choose an iTool file writer class on which your new operation will be based. In almost all cases, you will base your new operation on the IDLitWriter class, which handles registration of standard file properties and provides standard messaging features.
- Provide methods that extract the image data from the data object and create a file using IDL's output routines (PRINT, WRITE, or one of the IDL WRITE_* routines).

[This chapter](#) describes the process of creating a new file writer based on the IDLitWriter class.

Predefined iTool File Writers

The iTool system distributed with IDL includes a number of predefined file writers. You can include these file writers in an iTool directly by registering the class with your iTool (as described in “[Registering a File Writer](#)” on page 270). You can also create a new file writer class based on one of the predefined classes.

IDLitWriteASCII

The iTools ASCII file writer uses the IDL PRINTF procedure to print strings to a file.

Registered Properties

STRING_SEPARATOR — A string that is used to separate the values stored in the ASCII file.

USE_DEFAULT_FORMAT — A boolean value that specifies whether a default format string should be used.

STRING_FORMAT — A string specifying the format string to be used when writing the data to the ASCII file. See “[Format Codes](#)” in [Chapter 18](#), “[Files and Input/Output](#)” in the *Building IDL Applications* manual for a discussion of format codes.

Note

The format code should not include parentheses.

IDLitWriteBinary

The iTools Binary file writer uses the IDL WRITEU procedure to write unformatted binary data to a file.

Registered Properties

None

IDLitWriteBMP

The iTools BMP file writer uses the IDL WRITE_BMP procedure to write an image and its color table vectors to a Microsoft Windows Version 3 device independent bitmap file (.bmp).

Registered Properties

BIT_DEPTH — Bit depth at which to write the image.

IDLitWriteEMF

The iTools EMF file writer uses the iTools system clipboard to write an image and its color table vectors to a Microsoft Windows Enhanced Metafile (.emf).

Registered Properties

GRAPHICS_FORMAT — A integer that specifies whether graphics should be rendered using bitmap (0) or vector (1) output.

IDLitWriteEPS

The iTools EPS file writer uses the iTools system clipboard to write an image and its color table vectors to a Microsoft Windows Enhanced Metafile (.emf).

Registered Properties

COLOR_MODEL — An integer that specifies whether graphics should be rendered using the RGB (0) or CMYK (1) PostScript Output Color Model.

GRAPHICS_FORMAT — An integer that specifies whether graphics should be rendered using bitmap (0) or vector (1) output.

IDLitWriteISV

The iTools ISV file writer saves the current iTool state, including data in the data manager, visualizations, annotations, and operation property settings to a file with the extension .isv. ISV files can be restored by launching an iTool and selecting the file using the **File** → **Open** menu item.

Registered Properties

None

IDLitWriteJPEG

The iTools JPEG file writer uses the IDL WRITE_JPEG procedure to write compressed images to files. JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group) is a standardized compression method for full-color and gray-scale images.

Registered Properties

GRAYSCALE — A boolean value that specifies whether the image should be written as TrueColor or Grayscale

QUALITY — An integer specifying the quality index, in the range of 0 (terrible) to 100 (excellent) for the JPEG file. The default value is 75, which corresponds to very

good quality. Lower values of `QUALITY` produce higher compression ratios and smaller files.

IDLitWriteJPEG2000

The iTools JPEG2000 file writer uses the IDL `WRITE_JPEG2000` procedure to write compressed images to files. JPEG 2000 is a wavelet-based compression method for full-color and gray-scale images.

Registered Properties

N_LAYERS — An integer specifying the number of quality layers to include.

N_LEVELS — An integer specifying the number of wavelet decomposition levels.

REVERSIBLE — A boolean value that specifies whether to use reversible (lossless) compression.

IDLitWritePICT

The iTools PICT file writer uses the IDL `WRITE_PICT` procedure to write an image and its color table vectors to a PICT (version 2) format image file. The PICT format is used by Apple Macintosh computers.

Registered Properties

None

IDLitWritePNG

The iTools PNG file writer uses the IDL `WRITE_PNG` procedure to write an image to a Portable Network Graphics (PNG) file. The data in the file is stored using lossless compression with either 8 or 16 data bits per channel, based on the input IDL variable type.

Registered Properties

BIT_DEPTH — Bit depth at which to write the image.

IDLitWriteTIFF

The iTools TIFF file writer uses the IDL `WRITE_TIFF` procedure to write TIFF files.

Registered Properties

BIT_DEPTH — Bit depth at which to write the image.

COMPRESSION — An integer specifying the type of compression to use.

Creating a New File Writer

The process of creating an visualization type is outlined in the following sections:

- “[Creating the Class Structure Definition](#)” on page 258
- “[Creating an Init Method](#)” on page 259
- “[Creating a Cleanup Method](#)” on page 264
- “[Creating a GetProperty Method](#)” on page 264
- “[Creating a SetProperty Method](#)” on page 265
- “[Creating a SetData Method](#)” on page 266

Creating the Class Structure Definition

When any IDL object is created, IDL looks for an IDL class structure definition that specifies the instance data fields needed by an instance of the object, along with the data types of those fields. The object class structure must have been defined *before* any objects of the type are created. In practice, when the IDL OBJ_NEW function attempts to create an instance of a specified object class, it executes a procedure named *ObjectClass__define* (where *ObjectClass* is the name of the object), which is expected to define an IDL structure variable with the correct name and structure fields. For additional information on how IDL creates object instances, see “[The Object Lifecycle](#)” in Chapter 13 of the *Object Programming* manual.

Note

The class structure definition is generally the last routine in the `.pro` file that defines an object class.

Subclassing from the IDLitWriter Class

The IDLitWriter class is the base class for all iTool file writers. In almost all cases, new file writers will be subclassed either from the IDLitWriter class or from a class that is a subclass of IDLitWriter.

See “[IDLitWriter](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details on the methods properties available to classes that subclass from IDLitWriter.

Example Class Structure Definition

The following is the class structure definition for the `ExampleWriter` file writer class. This procedure should be the last procedure in a file named `examplewriter__define.pro`.

```
PRO ExampleWriter__Define

    struct = { ExampleWriter,          $
              INHERITS IDLitWriter $
            }

END
```

Discussion

The purpose of the structure definition routine is to define a named IDL structure with structure fields that will contain the visualization object instance data. The structure name should be the same as the visualization's class name — in this case, `ExampleWriter`.

Like many iTool file writer classes, `ExampleWriter` is created as a subclass of the `IDLitWriter` class. File writer classes that subclass from the `IDLitWriter` class inherit all of the standard iTool file writer features, as described in [“Subclassing from the IDLitWriter Class”](#) on page 258.

The `ExampleWriter` class has no instance data of its own. For a more complex example, see [“Example: TIFF File Writer”](#) on page 273.

Creating an Init Method

The file writer class `Init` method handles any initialization required by the file writer object, and should do the following:

- define the `Init` function method, using the keyword inheritance mechanism to handle “extra” keywords
- call the `Init` methods of any superclasses, using the keyword inheritance mechanism to pass “extra” keywords
- register any properties of your file writer, and set property attributes as necessary
- perform other initialization steps as necessary
- return the value 1 if the initialization steps are successful, or 0 otherwise

Definition of the Init Function

Begin by defining the argument and keyword list for your Init method. The argument and keyword list defines positional parameters (arguments) accepted by your method, defines any keywords that will be handled directly by your method, and specifies whether keywords not explicitly handled by your method will be passed through to other routines called by your method via IDL's keyword inheritance mechanism. The Init method for a file writer generally looks something like this:

```
FUNCTION MyWriter::Init, MYKEYWORD1 = mykeyword1, $
    MYKEYWORD2 = mykeyword2, ..., _REF_EXTRA = _extra
```

where *MyWriter* is the name of your file writer class and the *MYKEYWORD* parameters are keywords handled explicitly by your Init function.

Note

Always use keyword inheritance (the `_REF_EXTRA` keyword) to pass keyword parameters through to any called routines. (See “[Keyword Inheritance](#)” in Chapter 5 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for details on IDL's keyword inheritance mechanism.)

Superclass Initialization

The file writer class Init method should call the Init method of any required superclass. For example, if your file writer is based on an existing file writer class, you would call that class' Init method:

```
self->SomeFileWriterClass::Init(_EXTRA = _extra)
```

where *SomeFileWriterClass* is the class definition file for the file writer on which your new file writer is based.

Note

Your file writer class may have multiple superclasses. In general, each superclass' Init method should be invoked by your class' Init method.

Error Checking

Rather than simply calling the superclass Init method, it is a good idea to check whether the call to the superclass Init method succeeded. The following statement checks the value returned by the superclass Init method; if the returned value is 0 (indicating failure), the current Init method also immediately returns with a value of 0:

```
IF ( self->SomeFileWriterClass::Init(_EXTRA = _extra) EQ 0) THEN $
```

```
RETURN, 0
```

This convention is used in all file writer classes included with IDL. RSI strongly suggests that you include similar checks in your own class definition files.

Keywords to the Init Method

Properties of the file writer class can be set in the Init method by specifying the property names and values as IDL keyword-value pairs. In addition to any keywords implemented directly in the Init method of the superclass on which you base your class, the properties of the IDLitWriter class, IDLitComponent class, and IDLitMessaging class are available to any file writer class. See “[IDLitReader Properties](#)”, “[IDLitComponent Properties](#)”, and “[IDLitMessaging Properties](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual.

Note

Always use keyword inheritance (the `_EXTRA` keyword) to pass keyword parameters through to the superclass. (See “[Keyword Inheritance](#)” in Chapter 5 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for details on IDL’s keyword inheritance mechanism.)

Standard Base Class

While you can create your new file writer class from any existing file writer class, in many cases, file writer classes you create will be subclassed directly from the base class IDLitWriter:

```
IF ( self->IDLitWriter::Init(Extensions, TYPES = types, $
    _EXTRA = _extra) EQ 0) $
    THEN RETURN, 0
```

where *Extensions* is a string or array of strings specifying the filename extensions readable by your file writer and *types* is a string or array of strings specifying the iTool data types for which this writer is available. (See “[iTool Data Types](#)” on page 54 for details on iTool data types.)

Note

The value of the *Extensions* argument is used only to display the proper filename filter when a File Save dialog is displayed — it is not a check for the proper filetype.

The IDLitWriter class provides the base iTool file writer functionality used in the tools created by RSI. See “[Subclassing from the IDLitWriter Class](#)” on page 258 for details.

Return Value

If all of the routines and methods used in the `Init` method execute successfully, it should indicate successful initialization by returning 1. Other file writer classes that subclass from your file writer class may check this return value, as your routine should check the value returned by any superclass `Init` methods called.

Registering Properties

File writer objects can register properties with the iTool. Registered properties show up in the property sheet interface shown in the *system preferences browser* (described in “[Properties of the iTools System](#)” on page 85), and can be modified interactively by users. The iTool property interface is described in detail in [Chapter 4, “Property Management”](#).

Register a property by calling the `RegisterProperty` method of the `IDLitComponent` class:

```
self->RegisterProperty, PropertyIdentifier [, TypeCode] $
    [, ATTRIBUTE = value]
```

where *PropertyIdentifier* is a string that uniquely identifies the property, *TypeCode* is an integer between 0 and 9 specifying the property data type, and *ATTRIBUTE* is a property attribute. See “[Registering Properties](#)” on page 74 for details.

Note

A file writer need not register any properties at all, if the write operation is simple. Many of the standard iTool image file writer work without registering any properties.

Setting Property Attributes

If a property has already been registered, perhaps by a superclass of your file writer class, you can change the registered attribute values using the `SetPropertyAttribute` method of the `IDLitComponent` class:

```
self->SetPropertyAttribute, Identifier
```

where *Identifier* is the name of the keyword to the `GetProperty` and `SetProperty` methods used to retrieve or change the value of this property. (The *Identifier* is specified in the call to `RegisterProperty` either via the *PropertyName* argument or the `IDENTIFIER` keyword.) See “[Property Attributes](#)” on page 78 for additional details.

Passing Through Caller-Supplied Property Settings

If you have included the `_REF_EXTRA` keyword in your function definition, you can use IDL's keyword inheritance mechanism to pass any “extra” keyword values included in the call to the `Init` method through to other routines. One of the things this allows you to do is specify property settings when the `Init` method is called; simply include each property's keyword/value pair when calling the `Init` method, and include the following in the body of the `Init` method:

```
IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) GT 0) THEN $
    self->MyWriter::SetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra
```

where `MyWriter` is the name of your file writer class. This line has the effect of passing any “extra” keyword values to your file writer class' `SetProperty` method, where they can either be handled directly or passed through to the `SetProperty` methods of the superclasses of your class. See “[Creating a SetProperty Method](#)” on page 265 for details.

Example Init Method

```
FUNCTION ExampleWriter::Init, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

    IF (self->IDLitWriter::Init('ppm', TYPE='IDLIMAGE', $
        NAME='Portable Pixmap (PPM) File', $
        DESCRIPTION="PPM File Writer", $
        _EXTRA = _extra) EQ 0) THEN $
        RETURN, 0

    RETURN, 1

END
```

Discussion

The `ExampleWriter` class is based on the `IDLitWriter` class (discussed in “[Subclassing from the IDLitWriter Class](#)” on page 258). As a result, all of the standard features of an `iTool` file writer class are already present. We don't define any keyword values to be handled explicitly in the `Init` method, but we do use the keyword inheritance mechanism to pass keyword values through to methods called within the `Init` method. The `ExampleWriter` `Init` method does the following things:

1. Calls the `Init` method of the superclass, `IDLitWriter`. We specify a list of accepted filename extensions (only `ppm`, in this case) via the `Extensions` argument, and set the `TYPES` keyword. We include a description of the writer via the `DESCRIPTION` keyword. Finally, we use the `_EXTRA` keyword

inheritance mechanism to pass through any keywords provided when the `ExampleWriter Init` method is called.

2. Returns the integer 1, indicating successful initialization.

Creating a Cleanup Method

The file writer class `Cleanup` method handles any cleanup required by the file writer object, and should do the following:

- destroy any pointers or objects created by the file writer
- call the superclass' `Cleanup` method

Calling the superclass' cleanup method will destroy any objects created when the superclass was initialized.

Note

If your file writer class is based on the `IDLitWriter` class, and does not create any pointers or objects of its own, the `Cleanup` method is not strictly required. It is always safest, however, to create a `Cleanup` method that calls the superclass' `Cleanup` method.

See “[IDLitWriter::Cleanup](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example Cleanup Method

```
PRO ExampleWriter::Cleanup
    ; Clean up superclass
    self->IDLitWriter::Cleanup
END
```

Discussion

Since our file writer object does not have any instance data of its own, the `Cleanup` method simply calls the superclass `Cleanup` method.

Creating a GetProperty Method

The file writer class `GetProperty` method retrieves property values from the file writer object instance or from instance data of other associated objects. It should retrieve the requested property value, either from the file writer object's instance data or by calling another class' `GetProperty` method.

Note

Any property registered with a call to the `RegisterProperty` method must be listed as a keyword to the `GetProperty` method either of the visualization class or one of its superclasses.

Note

A file writer need not register any properties at all, if the write operation is simple. Many of the standard iTool image file writers work without registering any properties.

See “[IDLitWriter::GetProperty](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example GetProperty Method

```
PRO ExampleWriter::GetProperty, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

    IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) GT 0) THEN $
        self->IDLitWriter::GetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra

END
```

Discussion

The `GetProperty` method first defines the keywords it will accept. There must be a keyword for each property of the file writer. Since the file writer we are creating has no properties of its own, there are no keywords explicitly defined. Note the use of the keyword inheritance mechanism to allow us to get properties from the `ExampleWriter` class’ superclasses without knowing the names of the properties.

Since our `ExampleWriter` class has no properties of its own, we simply call the superclass’ `GetProperty` method, passing in all of the keywords stored in the `_extra` structure.

Creating a SetProperty Method

The file writer `SetProperty` method stores property values in the file writer object’s instance data. It should set the specified property value, either by storing the value directly in the visualization object’s instance data or by calling another class’ `SetProperty` method.

Note

Any property registered with a call to the `RegisterProperty` method must be listed as a keyword to the `SetProperty` method either of the visualization class or one of its superclasses.

Note

A file writer need not register any properties at all, if the write operation is simple. Many of the standard iTool image file writer work without registering any properties.

See “[IDLitWriter::SetProperty](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example SetProperty Method

```
PRO ExampleWriter::SetProperty, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

    IF (N_ELEMENTS(_extra) GT 0) THEN $
        self->IDLitWriter::SetProperty, _EXTRA = _extra

END
```

Discussion

The `SetProperty` method first defines the keywords it will accept. There must be a keyword for each property of the visualization type. Since the file writer we are creating has no properties of its own, there are no keywords explicitly defined. Note the use of the keyword inheritance mechanism to allow us to set properties from the `ExampleWriter` class’ superclasses without knowing the names of the properties.

Using the `N_ELEMENTS` function, we check to see whether any properties were specified via the keyword inheritance mechanism. If any keywords were specified, we call the superclass’ `SetProperty` method, passing in all of the keywords stored in the `_extra` structure.

Creating a SetData Method

The file writer `SetData` method does the work of the file writer, extracting data from the selected iTool data object and writing the data to a file using some method. If the process is successful, the `SetData` method must return 1 for success.

In our example, we write the selected data to a Portable Pixmap (PPM) file. As a result, we do some additional checking to ensure that the data that the user has selected can be displayed as an image.

See “[IDLitWriter::SetData](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

Example SetData Method

```

FUNCTION ExampleWriter::SetData, oImageData

    ; Prompt user for a file in which to save the data
    strFilename = self->GetFilename()
    IF (strFilename EQ '') THEN $
        RETURN, 0 ; failure

    ; Check validity of the input data object
    IF (~ OBJ_VALID(oImageData)) THEN BEGIN
        self->ErrorMessage, ['Invalid image data object'], $
            TITLE = 'Error', SEVERITY = 2
        RETURN, 0 ; failure
    ENDIF

    ; Check the iTool data type of the selected data object.
    ; If the data is not of a type that can be written to an
    ; image file, display an error message.
    oData = oImageData->GetByType("IDLIMAGE", COUNT = count)
    IF (count EQ 0) THEN $ ; no image, image pixels?
        oData = oImageData->GetByType("IDLIMAGEPIXELS", $
            COUNT = count)
    IF (count EQ 0) THEN $ ; no image, array 2d?
        oData = oImageData->GetByType("IDLARRAY2D", COUNT = count)
    IF (count EQ 0) THEN BEGIN
        self->ErrorMessage, $
            ["Invalid data provided to file writer."], $
            TITLE="Error", SEVERITY = 2
        RETURN, 0 ; failure
    END

    ; Turn a 1-D object array into a scalar object.
    oData = oData[0]

    ; Determine whether the data is an image.
    isImage = OBJ_ISA(oData, "IDLitDataIDLImage")

    ; If data is an image, get image pixels, otherwise
    ; turn data into an image.
    IF (isImage NE 0) THEN BEGIN
        result = oData->GetData(image, 'ImagePixels')
    ENDIF ELSE BEGIN
        result = oData->GetData(image)
    ENDELSE

```

```

; Check the result of the GetData method.
IF (result EQ 0) THEN BEGIN
    self->ErrorMessage, ['Error retrieving image data'], $
        TITLE = 'Error', SEVERITY = 2
    RETURN, 0 ; failure
ENDIF

; Get number of dimensions of image array.
ndim = SIZE(image, /N_DIMENSIONS)

; Write to a PPM file. Use REVERSE to make image appear
; with correct orientation.
WRITE_PPM, strFilename, REVERSE(image, ndim)

; Return 1 for success.
RETURN, 1

END

```

Discussion

The `SetData` method accepts an `IDLitData` object (`oImageData`) as its input parameter. Before processing the input data, the method prompts the user for a file in which to save the image, using the `GetFilename` method of the `IDLitWriter` object.

After securing a filename, the method proceeds to check the input data object. First it checks to make sure that the input object is valid. Then it attempts to retrieve data of an appropriate `iTool` data type from the data object; in this example, the method tries to extract an data of one of the following types using the `GetByType` method of the `IDLitData` class:

- `IDLIMAGE`
- `IDLIMAGEPIXELS`
- `IDLARRAY2D`

If no data of any of these types is found, the method displays an error message and exits.

Once the method has obtained an appropriate data object, it checks to determine whether the data object is an `IDLitDataIDLImage` object; if so, it attempts to retrieve the image pixels from the data object; otherwise it simply retrieves the data array. The data retrieved by the `GetData` method is stored in the variable `image`. The method then checks the return value from the `GetData` method to determine whether the returned value is valid.

Using the valid image data, the method determines the number of dimensions and then uses the `WRITE_PPM` procedure to create an image file. The image data must

be processed by the REVERSE function in order to make it appear in the output file with the correct orientation.

Registering a File Writer

Before a file writer can be used by an iTool to write a file, the file writer's class definition must be registered as being available to the iTool. Registering a file writer with the iTool links the class definition file that contains the actual IDL code that defines the file writer with a simple string that names the writer. Code that calls a file writer in an iTool uses the name string to specify which writer should be created.

Using IDLitTool::RegisterFileWriter

In most cases, you will register a file writer with the iTool in the iTool's class Init method. Registration ensures that the file writer is available when the iTool attempts to use it to write a file. (See “[Creating a New iTool Class](#)” on page 91 for details on the iTool class Init method.)

To register a file writer, call the IDLitTool::RegisterFileWriter method:

```
self->RegisterFileWriter, Writer_Type, WriterType_Class_Name, $  
    ICON = icon
```

where *Writer_Type* is the string you will use when referring to the file writer, *WriterType_Class_Name* is a string that specifies the name of the class file that contains the file writer's definition, and *icon* is a string containing the name of a bitmap file to be used in the preferences browser.

Note

The file *WriterType_Class_Name__define.pro* must exist somewhere in IDL's path for the file writer to be successfully registered.

See “[IDLitTool::RegisterFileWriter](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

Specifying Useful Properties

You can set any property of the [IDLitWriter](#) and [IDLitComponent](#) classes when registering a file writer. The following properties may be of particular interest:

ICON

Set this property to a string value giving the name of an icon to be associated with this object. Typically, this property is the name of a bitmap file to be used when displaying the object in a tree view. See “[Icon Bitmaps](#)” on page 44 for details on where bitmap icon files are located.

Unregistering a File Writer

If you are creating a new `iTool` from an existing `iTool` class, you may want to remove a file writer registered for the existing class from your new tool. This can be useful if you have an `iTool` class that implements all of the functionality you need, but which registers a file writer you don't want included in your `iTool`. Rather than recreating the `iTool` class to remove the file writer, you could create your new `iTool` class in such a way that it inherits from the existing `iTool` class, but *unregisters* the unwanted file writer.

Unregister a file writer by calling the `IDLitTool::UnregisterFileWriter` method in the `Init` method of your `iTool` class:

```
self->UnregisterFileWriter, identifier
```

where *identifier* is the string name used when registering the file writer.

For example, suppose you are creating a new `iTool` that subclasses from a standard `iTool` that is based on the `IDLitToolbase` class. If you wanted your new tool to behave just like a standard tool, with the exception that it would not export PNG files, you could include the following method call in your `iTool`'s `Init` method:

```
self->UnregisterFileWriter, 'PNG File Writer'
```

Finding the Identifier String

To find the string value used as the *identifier* parameter to the `UnregisterFileWriter` method, you can inspect the class file that registers the file writer (if the file writer is registered by a user-created class), or use the `FindIdentifiers` method of the `IDLitTool` object to generate a list of registered file writers. (Standard `iTool` file writers are pre-registered within the `iTool` framework.)

If the file writer is registered in a user-created class, you could inspect the class definition file to find a call to the `RegisterFileWriter` method, which looks something like this:

```
self->RegisterFileWriter, 'PNG File Writer', 'IDLitReadPNG'
```

The first argument to the `RegisterFileWriter` method ('PNG File Writer') is the string name of the file writer.

Alternatively, to generate a list of relative identifiers for all file writers registered with the current tool, use the following statements:

```
void = ITGETCURRENT(TOOL=oTool)
fwlist = oTool->FindIdentifiers(/FILE_WRITERS)
FOR i = 0, N_ELEMENTS(fwlist)-1 DO PRINT, $
```

```
STRMID(fwlist[i], STRPOS(fwlist[i], '/', /REVERSE_SEARCH)+1)
```

See “[IDLitTool::FindIdentifiers](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

Example: TIFF File Writer

This example creates a file writer to write TIFF format files.

Example Code

The code for this example file writer is included in the file `example1_writetiff__define.pro` in the `examples/doc/itools` subdirectory of the IDL distribution. Enter

```
example1tool
```

at the IDL prompt to create an instance of an iTool that registers this file writer. Open the file in any text editor or enter

```
.edit example1_writetiff__define
```

at the IDLDE prompt to open the `.pro` file in the IDL editor.

Note

The standard TIFF file writer included with the iTools contains additional features not included in this example. In most cases, if a file writer is included in the standard iTool distribution, there is no need to create your own writer for files of the same type.

Class Definition File

The class definition for `example1_writetiff` consists of an `Init` method, a `SetData` method, and a class structure definition routine. As with all object class definition files, the class structure definition routine is the last routine in the file, and the file is given the same name as the class definition routine (with the suffix `.pro` appended).

Class Definition Discussion

```
PRO example1_writetiff__Define

    struct = {example1_writetiff,      $
              inherits IDLitWriter $
            }

END
```

Discussion

Our class definition routine is very simple. We create an IDL structure variable with the name `example1_writetiff`, specifying that the structure inherits from the `IDLitWriter` class. The object has no instance data, and thus no instance data fields.

Init Method

```
FUNCTION example1_writetiff::Init, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

    IF (self->IDLitWriter::Init('tiff', $
        TYPES=['IDLIMAGE', 'IDLIMAGEPIXELS', 'IDLARRAY2D'], $
        NAME="Tag Image File Format", $
        DESCRIPTION="Tag Image File Format (TIFF)", $
        _EXTRA = _extra) EQ 0) THEN $
        RETURN, 0

    RETURN, 1

END
```

Discussion

The first item in our class definition file is the `Init` method. The `Init` method's function signature is defined first, using the class name `example1_writetiff`. Note the use of the `_REF_EXTRA` keyword inheritance mechanism; this allows any keywords specified in a call to the `Init` method to be passed through to routines that are called within the `Init` method even if we do not know the names of those keywords in advance.

Next, we call the `Init` method of the superclass. In this case, we are creating a subclass of the `IDLitWriter` class; this provides us with all of the standard `iTool` file writer functionality automatically. Any “extra” keywords specified in the call to our `Init` method are passed to the `IDLitWriter::Init` method via the keyword inheritance mechanism.

We specify a list of accepted filename extensions (`tiff`, in this case) via the *Extensions* argument, and set the `TYPES` keyword equal to the `iTool` data type of data that can be written using this file writer. (The `iTool` data types specified by the `TYPES` keyword must match the `iTool` data type of the data selected in the `iTool` Export Wizard in order for the file writer to be available for selection.)

We specify a value for the `NAME` property of the writer object (this is displayed in the system preferences dialog) and include a description of the writer via the `DESCRIPTION` keyword. Finally, we use the `_EXTRA` keyword inheritance mechanism to pass through any keywords provided when the `Init` method is called.

Finally, we return the value 1 to indicate successful initialization.

SetData Method

```

FUNCTION example1_writetiff::SetData, oImageData

    ; We need a filename for the file we are about to write.
    strFilename = self->GetFilename()
    IF (strFilename EQ '') THEN $
        RETURN, 0 ; failure

    ; Make sure that the object passed to this method is valid.
    IF (~ OBJ_VALID(oImageData)) THEN BEGIN
        MESSAGE, 'Invalid image data object.', /CONTINUE
        RETURN, 0 ; failure
    ENDIF

    ; First, we look for some image data.
    oData = (oImageData->GetByType('IDLIMAGEPIXELS'))[0]

    ; If we did not get any image data, try retrieving a
    ; 2D array.
    IF (~ OBJ_VALID(oData)) THEN BEGIN
        oData = (oImageData->GetByType('IDLARRAY2D'))[0]
        IF (~ OBJ_VALID(oData)) THEN RETURN, 0
    ENDIF

    ; If we got neither image data nor a 2D array,
    ; exit with a failure code.
    IF (~ oData->GetData(image)) THEN BEGIN
        MESSAGE, 'Error retrieving image data.', /CONTINUE
        RETURN, 0 ; failure
    ENDIF

    ; Next, try to retrieve a palette object from the selected
    ; object.
    oPalette = (oImageData->GetByType('IDLPALETTE'))[0]

    ; If we got a palette object, retrieve the palette data
    ; and store the information in the variables red, green,
    ; and blue.
    IF (OBJ_VALID(oPalette)) THEN BEGIN
        success = oPalette->GetData(palette)
        IF (N_ELEMENTS(palette) GT 0) THEN BEGIN
            red = REFORM(palette[0,*])
            green = REFORM(palette[1,*])
            blue = REFORM(palette[2,*])
        ENDIF
    ENDIF
ENDIF

```

```

; Retrieve the number of dimensions in our image.
ndim = SIZE(image, /N_DIMENSIONS)

; Write the file. The REVERSE ensures that other
; applications will read the image in right side up.
WRITE_TIFF, strFilename, REVERSE(image, ndim), $
    RED = red, GREEN = green, BLUE = blue

RETURN, 1 ; success

END

```

Discussion

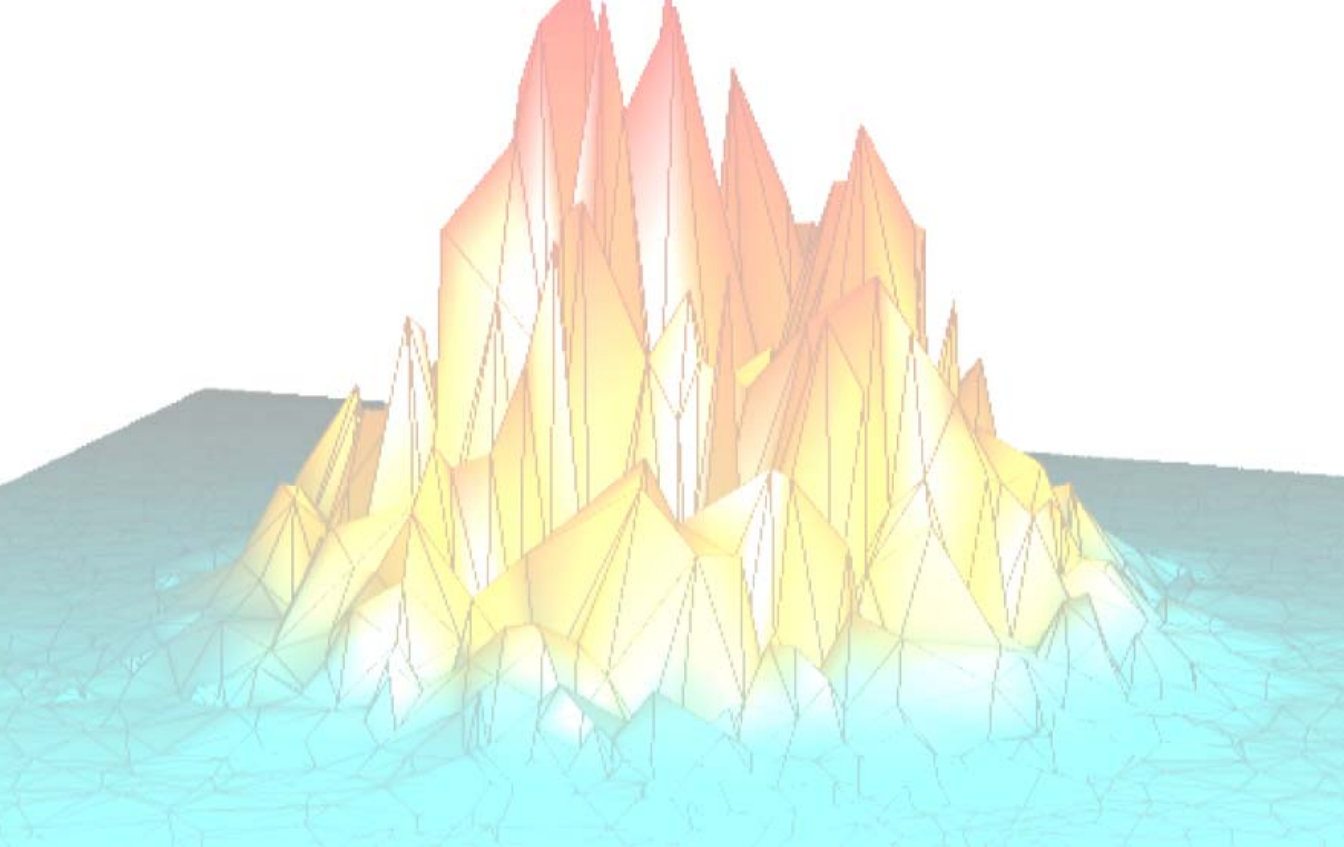
The `SetData` method accepts an `IDLitData` object (`oImageData`) as its input parameter. Before processing the input data, the method prompts the user for a file in which to save the image, using the `GetFilename` method of the `IDLitWriter` object.

After securing a filename, the method proceeds to check the input data object. First it checks to make sure that the input object is valid. Then it attempts to retrieve a data object of the `iTool` data type `IDLIMAGEPIXELS` from the data object, using the `GetByType` method. If this fails, it attempts to retrieve a data object of the `iTool` data type `IDLARRAY2D` from the data object, again using the `GetByType` method. If this second attempt fails, we exit, returning 0.

Next, we use the `GetData` method to retrieve the image data from the data object. The method then checks the return value from the `GetData` method to determine whether the returned value is valid, and exits if it is not.

The method next attempts to retrieve a object of the data type `IDLPALETTE` from the input object. If a palette is retrieved, the palette data is reformed to suit the needs of the `WRITE_TIFF` procedure.

Finally, the method uses the `WRITE_TIFF` procedure to create an image file. The image data must be processed by the `REVERSE` function in order to make it appear in the output file with the correct orientation.



Part III: Modifying the iTool User Interface



Chapter 11

iTool User Interface Architecture

This chapter provides an overview of the iTool user interface architecture.

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Overview of iTool Interface Architecture

The iTool user interface architecture is designed to preserve the separation between the functionality provided by an iTool application and the manner in which that functionality is presented to the user. While the process of creating a user interface for the iTool application is complex, the idea is simple: the iTool can choose from any number of *user interface styles* that present information to the user in unique ways, depending on the operating environment.

While the initial release of the iTool component framework includes only one user interface style, created from IDL's graphical widget interface toolkit, the iTool framework design allows for the creation of additional user interface styles. Creating new interface elements, or even an entirely new user interface, does not require alterations to the underlying iTool implementation.

Note

In the first release of the IDL iTools system, the functionality necessary to create entirely new user interface styles is not fully defined. Future versions of the iTool system will provide the capability to create additional user interface styles.

Working within an existing interface style, you can add several different types of user interface elements to your iTools. In rough order of increasing complexity of implementation, iTool user interface elements include:

- Simple additional interface elements such as custom messages that appear in the iTool status area, informational dialogs, and simple yes-or-no type interactive user dialogs. These items can be added to an iTool using built-in methods of the `IDLitIMessaging` class. Built-in interface elements are described in [Chapter 12, “Using iTool User Interface Elements”](#).
- Modal dialogs that allow the user to provide complex information before an action is performed by the iTool. Dialog-based interface elements can be simple, perhaps allowing the user to enter a single numerical value, or complex, as shown by the iTool Curve Fitting operation's parameter-specification dialog. Dialog-based interfaces require the creation of a *user interface service*, which can then call code that creates the appropriate dialog interface for the platform and iTool interface style. User interface services are described in [Chapter 13, “Creating a User Interface Service”](#).
- iTool *panels*, which are non-modal collections of interface elements that are attached to the iTool visualization window. Panels are useful when complex controls must always be visible alongside a visualization; the iVolume and

iImage tools provide examples of a panel interface. Panel interfaces are described in [Chapter 14, “Creating a User Interface Panel”](#).

User Interface Objects

The iTool user interface object is an instance of the class `IDLitUI`. The UI object provides a way for the iTool to communicate with interface elements created using the IDL widget toolkit. As the center of communication between the user interface and the underlying iTool functionality, the UI object provides the following functionality:

- Access to and communication with the underlying iTool object.
- Registration and management of dialogs and other sub-elements of the user interface that are used by the iTool to perform specific tasks.
- Registration of user interface elements that are part of the iTool display itself.

One of the key features of the iTool user interface is the ability to adapt to the contents of the tool, sensitizing and desensitizing menu items or displaying dialogs or user interface panels as necessary. The `IDLitUI` object makes this adaptability possible while maintaining the slender link between tool functionality and user interface. The following features of the `IDLitUI` object make these features possible:

GetTool Method

The `IDLitUI::GetTool` method provides the means to retrieve an object reference to the underlying iTool object from user interface code. The retrieved reference can then be used to access data stored in iTool objects (property values, for example) and to call other iTool object methods.

UI Service Registration Methods

The `IDLitUI::RegisterUIService` and `IDLitUI::UnRegisterUIService` methods allow user interface code to register (and unregister) user interface services as being available for use by the iTool interface.

Note

User interface services are more normally registered by an iTool launch routine, using the `ITREGISTER` procedure.

User interface services are discussed in detail in [Chapter 13, “Creating a User Interface Service”](#).

Widget Registration Methods

The `IDLitUI::RegisterWidget` and `IDLitUI::UnRegisterWidget` methods allow user interface code to register (and unregister) widget callback routines as the target of `OnNotify` messages. Registration allows the user interface to receive messages generated by iTool components and to react accordingly.

Widget registration is discussed in detail in [Chapter 14, “Creating a User Interface Panel”](#).

AddOnNotifyObserver Method

The `IDLitUI::AddOnNotifyObserver` method allows user interface code to register to receive messages sent via calls to the `OnNotify` methods of iTool components. This mechanism allows the user interface to change in response to changes in the underlying iTool.

Use of the iTool messaging system is discussed in detail in [Chapter 14, “Creating a User Interface Panel”](#).

DoAction Method

The `IDLitUI::DoAction` method makes it possible for a user interface element to launch execution of an operation within the underlying iTool.

Use of the `DoAction` method to initiate execution of operations is discussed in [Chapter 13, “Creating a User Interface Service”](#).



Chapter 12

Using iTool User Interface Elements

This chapter describes user interface elements that can be incorporated into an iTool without the need to write any user interface code.

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The iTools Feedback Mechanism

The IDLitMessaging class provides methods that allow you to accept and return feedback via the iTool interface without writing any interface code yourself. For many applications, adding the ability to provide status information, prompt the user for simple input, and display appropriate error messages to the standard iTool interface is sufficient; in these cases, no additional code is needed to create and display user interfaces.

Note

The simple dialogs presented by the IDLitMessaging methods are similar to those displayed by the IDL DIALOG_MESSAGE function. Since the initial iTools release supports only one user interface style (built using the IDL widget interface toolkit) it may be tempting to use DIALOG_MESSAGE rather than the methods described in this chapter. As the iTools framework matures, however, additional user interface styles may be created either by RSI or by third-party developers. Using the built-in IDLitMessaging methods will ensure that your iTool applications continue to function properly when other interface styles are available.

[This chapter](#) discusses the use of the basic user interface elements provided by the IDLitMessaging class. If your application requires a more complex interface, see [Chapter 13, “Creating a User Interface Service”](#) or [Chapter 14, “Creating a User Interface Panel”](#).

Status Messages

Status messages are simple text messages displayed in a way that does not impede the user's operation of the iTool. In the standard iTool user interface created using the IDL widget toolkit, status messages are text strings displayed at the bottom of the iTool window.

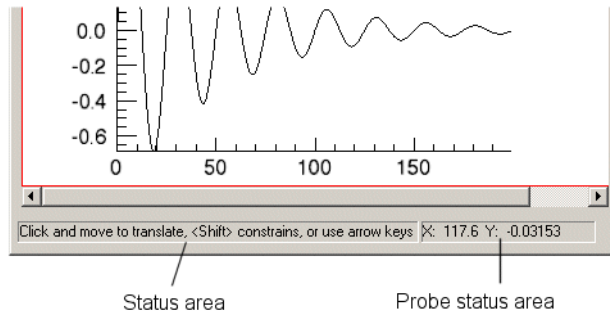


Figure 12-1: The status areas of a standard iTool.

The `IDLitIMessaging` class provides two methods that display status messages. See “[IDLitIMessaging](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

StatusMessage

The `IDLitIMessaging::StatusMessage` method displays a string value. In the standard iTool interface created using the IDL widget toolkit, status messages appear in the *status area* at the bottom left corner of the iTool window, as shown in [Figure 12-1](#).

In the standard set of iTools provided with IDL, the status area is used to display status information for operations or informational messages pertaining to the currently selected object or manipulator.

The following code places the text “My Status Message” in the status area:

```
self->StatusMessage, 'My Status Message'
```

ProbeStatusMessage

The `IDLitIMessaging::ProbeStatusMessage` method displays a string value. In the standard iTool interface created using the IDL widget toolkit, probe status messages appear at the bottom right corner of the iTool window, as shown in [Figure 12-1](#).

In the standard set of iTools provided with IDL, the probe status area is used to display the position of the cursor within the iTool window.

The following code places the text “X: 300, Y:146” in the status area:

```
self->ProbeStatusMessage, 'X: 300, Y:146'
```

In most cases, the values displayed in the probe status area have some relationship to the position of the cursor or to the action performed by the current manipulator.

Creating Additional Status Bar Segments

You can create additional named status bar segments using the `RegisterStatusBar` method of the `IDLitTool` class. The text displayed in the newly created status bar segment can then be modified using the `IDLitIMessaging::StatusMessage` method with the `SEGMENT_IDENTIFIER` keyword.

See [IDLitIMessaging::StatusMessage](#) and “[IDLitTool::RegisterStatusBarSegment](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

Prompts

Prompts solicit information from the user. Prompts are generally presented as modal dialogs, meaning that the user must respond to the prompt before operation of the iTool can continue.

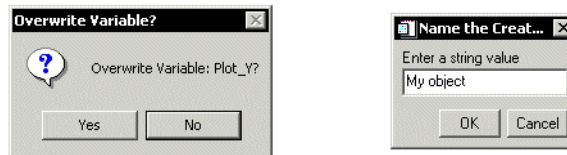


Figure 12-2: Yes/No and Text Prompt dialogs.

The `IDLitIMessaging` class provides two methods that prompt for user input: `PromptUserYesNo` and `PromptUserText`. See “[IDLitIMessaging](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details on these methods.

PromptUserYesNo

The `IDLitIMessaging::PromptUserYesNo` method displays a prompt string along with **Yes** and **No** buttons. In the standard iTool interface created using the IDL widget toolkit, Yes/No prompts appear as modal dialogs as shown in [Figure 12-2](#).

Note

The `PromptUserYesNo` function returns 1 if the dialog executed properly. You must check the value stored in the variable specified as the *Answer* argument to determine which button the user pressed.

The following code asks the user a Yes or No question and performs some action if the dialog returns properly *and* the value of the returned variable `answer` is equal to 1 (as would be the case if the user clicked **Yes**):

```
status = self->PromptUserYesNo('Overwrite Variable: Plot_Y?', $
    answer, TITLE='Overwrite Variable?')

IF (status NE 0 && answer EQ 1) THEN BEGIN
    ; do something...
ENDIF
```

The value of the `TITLE` keyword is displayed in the title bar of the dialog box.

PromptUserText

The `IDLitIMessaging::PromptUserText` method displays a prompt string and a text-entry field along with **OK** and **Cancel** buttons. In the standard iTool interface created using the IDL widget toolkit, text prompts appear as modal dialogs as shown in [Figure 12-2](#).

Note

The `PromptUserText` function returns 1 if the user clicks the **OK** button, or 0 if the user clicks the **Cancel** button.

The following code asks the user to enter a text string, which will be stored in the variable `stringName`:

```
status = self->PromptUserText('Enter a string value', $
    stringName, TITLE = 'Name the Created Object')
```

The value of the `TITLE` keyword is displayed in the title bar of the dialog box. The variable `status` will contain a 1 if the user clicks **OK**, or a 0 if the user clicks **Cancel**.

Informational Messages

Informational Messages inform the user that some condition has occurred in the iTool application. The condition may be an error, but it can also be any other occurrence of which the user should be informed. Informational messages are presented as modal dialogs, generally with a single OK button that dismisses the dialog.

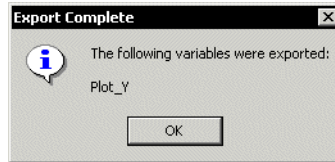


Figure 12-3: An informational message dialog.

The `IDLitIMessaging` class provides the `ErrorMessage` method to display informational messages of all sorts.

Error Message

The `IDLitIMessaging::ErrorMessage` method displays an informational text message to the user. In the standard iTool interface created using the IDL widget toolkit, informational messages appear as modal dialogs as shown in [Figure 12-3](#).

Informational messages can use any of three severity codes, indicating to the user whether the message is merely informational, is a warning, or reports a serious error. While the severity setting does not alter the behavior of the dialog, which can only be dismissed by the user, it can alter the appearance of the dialog. For example, the dialog shown in [Figure 12-3](#) has a severity setting of 0, or “Informational”.

The following code displays an informational message:

```
self->ErrorMessage, ['The following variables were exported:', $  
    'Plot_Y'], SEVERITY = 0, TITLE = 'Export Complete'
```

The value of the `TITLE` keyword is displayed in the title bar of the dialog box.

In addition to the `ErrorMessage` method, the `IDLitIMessaging` class provides the `SignalError` method, which reports an error condition to the iTool system but which does not display the message to the user. See “[IDLitIMessaging](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.



Chapter 13

Creating a User Interface Service

This chapter describes the process of creating a user interface service.

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| Predefined iTool UI Services | 295 | Executing a User Interface Service | 304 |
| Creating a New UI Service | 297 | Example: Changing a Property Value | 305 |

Overview of the iTool UI Service

A *UI service* is an iTool component object class that defines how and when a user interface element is presented to an iTool user. UI services provide a way to separate platform-independent iTool functionality from platform-dependent user interface code. When an iTool needs to display a graphical interface, it simply calls the appropriate UI service to display the interface; the iTool itself does not need to know anything at all about the platform on which it is running. Decisions about how to display the desired interface are left to the UI service, which can choose from any number of options based on the platform and user interface style in use.

Note

In the initial iTools release, only one user interface style is supplied: the IDL widget interface toolkit. As the iTools framework continues to grow, additional user interface styles may be created either by RSI or by third-party developers.

Creating and Using a UI Service

To create and use a new iTool UI service, you will do the following:

- Create an IDL function that displays the user interface elements. See [“Creating a New UI Service”](#) on page 297 for details.
- Register the new UI service with the iTools system. See [“Registering a UI Service”](#) on page 302 for details.
- Execute the UI service from iTool code. See [“Executing a User Interface Service”](#) on page 304 for details.

Predefined iTool UI Services

The iTool system distributed with IDL includes a number of predefined UI services. These UI services are registered with the iTool system, which means that you can call them from any operation, visualization, or other iTool component using the `DoUIService` method of the `IDLitTool` class.

The majority of the predefined UI services provide interface elements that are specific to the standard iTool implementation. In most cases, you do not need to call these services directly; using the existing iTool operation or visualization code that calls the UI service is sufficient. If you are creating a new UI service, you may want to inspect the code for some of the standard UI services — they are located in the `lib/itools/ui_widgets` subdirectory of the IDL directory and have file names of the form `idlitui*.pro`.

The following UI services are generally useful; you may wish to include calls to these services in your own iTool operation or visualization code.

Hourglass Cursor Service

Displays the hourglass cursor. The hourglass cursor is displayed until processing completes and a new IDL widget event is processed, at which time the previous cursor is reinstated.

Registered Service Name

HourGlassCursor

Example

```
void = oTool->DoUIService('HourGlassCursor', self)
```

Operation Property Sheet Service

This service is designed to be called from within the `DoExecuteUI` method of an iTool operation. It displays the property sheet for the operation, allowing the user to set any operation properties before the operation is executed. The *self* argument is the `IDLitOperation` object. The return value is 1 (one) if the specified properties were set as requested, or 0 (zero) otherwise.

Registered Service Name

PropertySheet

Example

```
RETURN, oTool->DoUIService('PropertySheet', self)
```

Operation Preview Service

This service is designed to be called from within the `DoExecuteUI` method of an `iTool` operation that acts on a two-dimensional array. It displays the property sheet for the operation, allowing the user to set any operation properties before the operation is executed, along with a preview window showing the result. The *self* argument is the `IDLitOperation` object. The return value is 1 (one) if the specified properties were set as requested, or 0 (zero) otherwise.

Note

The preview window displays a subset (a 128 by 128 element array) of the data being operated on. When the preview is displayed, the `Execute` method of your operation is called with this subset only. If your operation requires padding around the edges or has a minimum data array size, your operation's `GetProperty` method must implement a `MINIMUM_DIMENSIONS` property that specifies the smallest amount of data that can be used by the operation.

See the unsharp masking operation in the standard `iTools` distribution (`lib/iTools/components/idlitopunsharpmask__define.pro`) for an example.

Registered Service Name

OperationPreview

Example

```
RETURN, oTool->DoUIService('OperationPreview', self)
```


Creating a New UI Service

A user interface service is responsible for creating a user interface element that is displayed when an iTool user takes some action. A simple UI service may do no more than display the “hourglass” cursor while an operation is being performed; more complicated UI services may be small applications unto themselves.

For simple operations the UI service routine can contain everything necessary to implement the UI service. For more complex interfaces, however, it is often practical to separate the actual user interface code (that is, the widget creation and event-handling routines) from the logic of the UI service itself. The latter is the strategy used by many of the UI services included with the standard iTools.

The process of creating a user interface service is outlined in the following sections:

- [“Creating the UI Service Routine”](#) on page 297
- [“Creating Supporting User Interface Elements”](#) on page 300

Creating the UI Service Routine

The user interface service routine performs the following tasks:

- Manages changes to any properties of the object on which the user interface element was invoked.
- Manages the display of the user interface element.

To accomplish these things, the UI service routine needs a reference to the iTool component on which the service will act, and a reference to the IDLitUI object associated with the current iTool. As a result, the user interface service routine has the following signature:

```
FUNCTION ServiceName, oUI, oRequester
```

where *ServiceName* is the name of the function, *oUI* is an object reference to the IDLitUI object associated with the iTool, and *oRequester* is an object reference to the iTool component specified in the call to the DoUIService method.

Note

ServiceName is not necessarily the same as the registered name of the service used in the call to the DoUIService method. The registered name is defined by the call to the ITREGISTER procedure. See [“Registering a UI Service”](#) on page 302 for details.

Return Value

The user interface service routine should return 1 if the action succeeds, or 0 otherwise.

Retrieving Property Information

The *oRequester* argument to the user interface service function contains an object reference to the iTool component on which the UI service was invoked. Use this reference to retrieve any properties of the object that are relevant to the operation being performed by the user interface.

For example, the standard `ScaleFactor` user interface service displays a dialog that lets the user set the `SCALE_FACTOR` property of an object. The service uses the following statement to retrieve the current scale factor from the selected object:

```
oRequester->GetProperty, SCALE_FACTOR = factor
```

Retrieving Widget Information

The *oUI* argument to the user interface service function contains an object reference to the IDLitUI object associated with the current iTool. You can use this reference to retrieve the IDL widget identifier of the widget that is the *group leader* of the iTool user interface itself (the iTool window); the ID is stored in the `GROUP_LEADER` property of the IDLitUI object. Having this widget ID allows you to retrieve screen geometry information that allows you to calculate the position at which your user interface should be displayed.

For example, the `ScaleFactor` user interface service uses the following code to calculate the X and Y offsets that will be used to position its own user interface over the current iTool:

```
; Retrieve the widget ID of top-level base.
oUI->GetProperty, GROUP_LEADER = groupLeader

IF (WIDGET_INFO(groupLeader, /VALID)) THEN BEGIN
    geom = WIDGET_INFO(groupLeader, /GEOMETRY)
    xoffset = geom.scr_xsize + geom.xoffset - 80
    yoffset = geom.yoffset + (geom.ysize - 400)/2
ENDIF
```

The UI service goes on to use the calculated `xoffset` and `yoffset` values when positioning the IDL widgets that make up the interface displayed by the service.

Displaying the User Interface

If the user interface being displayed by the UI service is simple, it may be convenient to include the code for creating it directly in the definition of the user interface service itself. For example, the following is the complete definition of the `HourGlassCursor` user interface service:

```
FUNCTION IDLitUIHourGlass, oUI, oRequester
    WIDGET_CONTROL, /HOURGLASS
    RETURN, 1
END
```

As you can see, no information about the `IDLitUI` object or the selected `iTool` component is used, and the displayed item itself is very simple.

In most cases, the user interface service is significantly more complex. In these cases it is often useful to separate the routine that creates the service's user interface from the code that displays it. For example, the user interface for the `ScaleFactor` service is displayed by the following statement:

```
result = IDLitwdScaleFactor(GROUP_LEADER = groupLeader, $
    FACTOR = factor, XOFFSET = xoffset, YOFFSET = yoffset)
IF result EQ 1 THEN RETURN, 0
```

This statement calls another function — `IDLitwdScaleFactor` — to actually display the required user interface elements, supplying the information retrieved by other portions of the user interface service routine. The `IDLitwdScaleFactor` function returns the scale factor value selected by the user, or returns the value 1 (indicating no scaling) if the value supplied by the user is invalid. If the returned scale factor is 1 (either because the user entered 1 as the value, or because the entered value was not a valid value), no scaling will be performed, so the UI service itself returns the failure value (integer 0). The process of creating user interface elements is discussed in greater detail in [“Creating Supporting User Interface Elements”](#) on page 300.

Setting Property Information

If the user has selected a new value for any of the object's properties, that value must be changed on the object by a call to the `SetProperty` method. In our example, if the user sets a new scale factor, the following statement updates the property value, notifies the selected object that the value has changed, and inserts the change into the undo-redo transaction buffer:

```
oRequester->SetProperty, SCALE_FACTOR = result
```

Note that not every user interface will modify properties of the selected object.

Example

The following example routine is the full definition of the ScaleFactor user interface service described in the previous sections. It is presented here again for completeness, so you can see the entire function at once.

```

FUNCTION IDLituiScaleFactor, oUI, oRequester

    ; Retrieve widget ID of top-level base.
    oUI->GetProperty, GROUP_LEADER = groupLeader

    ; Retrieve geometry information and calculate offsets.
    IF (WIDGET_INFO(groupLeader, /VALID)) THEN BEGIN
        geom = WIDGET_INFO(groupLeader, /GEOMETRY)
        xoffset = geom.scr_xsize + geom.xoffset - 80
        yoffset = geom.yoffset + (geom.ysize - 400)/2
    ENDIF

    ; Retrieve the current scale factor from the selected object.
    oRequester->GetProperty, SCALE_FACTOR = factor

    ; Display the IDL widget interface allowing the user to
    ; change the scale factor. The new scale factor is returned
    ; as the result of this function. If the specified value is
    ; not a valid scale factor, the integer 1 is returned in
    ; result.
    result = IDLitwdScaleFactor( GROUP_LEADER = groupLeader, $
        FACTOR = factor, XOFFSET = xoffset, YOFFSET = yoffset)
    IF result EQ 1 THEN RETURN, 0

    ; Set properties on the selected object.
    oRequester->SetProperty, SCALE_FACTOR = result

    ; Return success.
    RETURN, 1

END

```

Creating Supporting User Interface Elements

It is beyond the scope of this manual to provide general information on the creation of user interfaces. For information on creating a user interface using the IDL widget toolkit, see [“Creating Graphical User Interfaces in IDL”](#) in the *Building IDL Applications* manual. The following are some suggestions for creating IDL widget interface code for iTool user interface services.

Place data collected by the user interface in the function's return value

Create your user interface routine (the routine that creates the IDL widgets that make up the user interface displayed by your UI service) as a function, returning the data values collected by the interface in the function's return value. If you are collecting several values of different data types, return a structure variable containing the data. The user interface and event-handling code should never change data or property values within the *iTool* itself; all changes should be made via the `SetProperty` mechanism.

Be sure to clean up heap variables when the user interface exits

If your user interface code creates pointer or object heap variables, be sure to destroy them before the interface code exits. If extra “hanging” heap variables are left undestroyed, IDL can potentially run out of resources if the interface is displayed numerous times.

Use the `GROUP_LEADER` property if it is available

Pass the widget ID contained in the `GROUP_LEADER` property of the `IDLitUI` object to your user interface code, and set the `GROUP_LEADER` keyword of the top-level base widget to this value. Setting the widget group leader to the leader of the *iTool*'s own widget hierarchy ensures that your user interface will be destroyed if the *iTool* itself is destroyed.

Registering a UI Service

Before a user interface service can be called from an iTool, the routine that implements the service must be registered with the iTool system. Registering a UI service with the system links the file containing the actual IDL code that creates the user interface elements with a simple string that names the UI service. Since you use the name string in code that calls the service, the iTool itself does not need to know anything about the display environment in which it is running.

User interface services are registered either using the ITREGISTER procedure or via a call to the RegisterUIService method of the IDLitUI object. In most cases, registration is accomplished via a call to the ITREGISTER procedure in an iTool's launch routine. A UI service can be registered at any time. In practice, you will probably find it convenient to register UI services used by an iTool in the iTool launch routine, unless you know the service has already been registered. For a list of UI services that are pre-registered by the standard iTools, see [“Predefined iTool UI Services”](#) on page 295.

Using ITREGISTER

Use the ITREGISTER routine to register a user interface service:

```
ITREGISTER, 'UI Service Name', 'UI_Service_Routine', /UI_SERVICE
```

where *UI Service Name* is a string you will use to call the user interface service, and *UI_Service_Routine* is a string that specifies the name of the file that contains the code for the user interface service.

Note

The file *UI_Service_Routine.pro* must exist somewhere in IDL's path for the service definition to be successfully registered.

If a given user interface service has already been registered when the ITREGISTER routine is called, the service will not be registered a second time. The registration can be performed at any time in an IDL session before you attempt to call the user interface service.

See [“ITREGISTER”](#) in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details.

Example

Suppose you have a UI service definition file named `myUIService.pro`, located in a directory included in IDL's `!PATH` system variable. Register this service with the `iTool` system with the following command:

```
ITREGISTER, 'My UI Service', 'myUIService', /UI_SERVICE
```

The user interface service can now be invoked via the `DoUIService` method:

```
success = oTool->DoUIService('My UI Service', self)
```

where `oTool` is an object reference to the current `iTool` object.

Using the RegisterUIService Method

User interface services can also be registered by a call to the `RegisterUIService` method of the `IDLitUI` object:

```
self->RegisterUIService, 'My UI Service', 'myUIService'
```

Note

In most cases, you do not have a reference to the `IDLitUI` object available, so this method is not generally useful. We mention it here because the user interface services registered for use by the standard `iTools` are registered in this way, rather than via the `ITREGISTER` procedure.

Executing a User Interface Service

Once you have defined and registered a user interface service and created any supporting user interface code, you can call the service from any `iTool` operation simply by calling the `DoUIService` method of the `IDLitTool` class.

In most cases, the `DoUIService` method is called from the `DoExecuteUI` method of an `IDLitOperation` or an `IDLitDataOperation`. For example, the following routine is the `DoExecuteUI` method of an operation that calls the `ScaleFactor` user interface service:

```
FUNCTION IDLitopScalefactor::DoExecuteUI

    oTool = self->GetTool()
    IF (oTool EQ OBJ_NEW()) THEN RETURN, 0

    RETURN, oTool->DoUIService('ScaleFactor', self)

END
```

The `GetTool` method is part of the `IDLitMessaging` class, which is a superclass of all `iTool` operation classes; it returns an object reference to the current `iTool`. This method calls the `ScaleFactor` user interface service with the operation itself as the currently selected object, which allows the UI service to modify the operation's properties. The second argument to the `DoUIService` method is an object reference that can be used by the service to modify the object's properties.

Example: Changing a Property Value

This example creates a user interface service named `SrvExample`, which displays a dialog that allows the user to change the `NAME` property of the currently selected `iTool` component. The `SrvExample` user interface service is launched by an `IDLitDataOperation` named `opName`.

This example is intended as a demonstration of the techniques used to create a user interface service. In practice, you do not have to create a user interface to change the `NAME` property; it can be changed more easily by altering the value in the Visualization browser. It is conceivable, however, that you might want to provide an interface that allows the user to change numerous properties simultaneously, with some values being based on other user-supplied values. Similarly, you may wish to display a dialog that allows the user to set the properties of an operation every time that operation is executed, without forcing the user to open the Operations browser.

Creating and using the `SrvExample` user interface service involves the following steps:

- [Creating the `SrvExample` Service](#)
- [Creating the `SrvExample` Interface](#)
- [Creating an Operation that Calls the Service](#)
- [Registering the `SrvExample` Service](#)
- [Registering the `opName` Operation](#)
- [Invoking the `opName` Operation](#)

Creating the `SrvExample` Service

The `SrvExample` user interface service consists of a single function named `SrvExample`, stored in a file named `srvexample.pro` that is located in a directory that is included in the `IDL !PATH` system variable.

```
FUNCTION SrvExample, oUI, oRequester

    ; Retrieve widget ID of top-level base.
    oUI->GetProperty, GROUP_LEADER = groupLeader

    ; Retrieve the original value of the name property
    ; attribute from the selected item.
    oRequester->GetProperty, NAME = origName

    ; Display the widget UI that allows the user to choose
```

```

; a new name.
newName = wdSrvExample(NAME = origName, $
    GROUP_LEADER = groupLeader)

; Set the property value.
oRequester->SetProperty, NAME = newName

; Return success
RETURN, 1

END

```

Discussion

The function that implements this example service follows the pattern outlined in [“Creating the UI Service Routine”](#) on page 297. It uses the object reference to the IDLitUI object to retrieve the widget ID of the top-level base of the iTool user interface, and later uses the retrieved value to set the GROUP_LEADER keyword to the user interface routine. It uses the object reference to the “requester” object (in this case, the iTool component that is selected in the current iTool) to retrieve the NAME property. It then calls a routine (`wdSrvExample`) that displays a user interface allowing the user to select a new value for the NAME property.

The string returned by the `wdSrvExample` routine is used to set the NAME property of the selected iTool component, and the routine returns 1 for success.

Creating the SrvExample Interface

The interface presented by the SrvExample user interface service consists of a set of routines that create an IDL widget interface. The creation routine and two simple event-handling routines are stored in a file named `wdsrvexample.pro` that is located in a directory that is included in the IDL `!PATH` system variable.

Widget Creation Function

The following function creates the widget interface that is displayed when the SrvExample user interface service is called. The widget creation routine should be the last routine in the file.

```

FUNCTION wdSrvExample, NAME = origName, TITLE = dialogTitle, $
    GROUP_LEADER = groupLeader

; Check to see if a title for the dialog was supplied.
; If not, set a default title.
IF (N_ELEMENTS(dialogTitle) EQ 0) THEN $
    dialogTitle='Choose a Name'

```

```

; Create the dialog.
wBase = WIDGET_BASE(/COLUMN, TITLE = dialogTitle, $
    GROUP_LEADER = groupLeader)
wText = WIDGET_TEXT(wBase, YSIZE = 3, $
    VALUE=['The original NAME is:', origName, $
    'Enter a new name:'])
wEdit = WIDGET_TEXT(wBase, VALUE = origName, /EDITABLE)
wSubBase = WIDGET_BASE(wBase, /ROW)
wOK = WIDGET_BUTTON(wSubBase, VALUE='OK', $
    EVENT_PRO='wdSrvExample_ok')
wCancel = WIDGET_BUTTON(wSubBase, VALUE='Cancel', $
    EVENT_PRO='wdSrvExample_cancel')

; Create a state structure to hold important values.
state = { wOK:wOK, $
    wCancel:wCancel, $
    wEdit:wEdit, $
    pName:PTR_NEW(/ALLOCATE) }

; Store the original property name attribute in the
; state structure.
*state.pName = origName

; Store the state structure in the user value of the
; top-level widget base.
WIDGET_CONTROL, wBase, SET_UVALUE = state

; Realize the widget hierarchy.
WIDGET_CONTROL, wBase, /REALIZE

; Call XMANAGER.
XMANAGER, 'wdSrvExample', wBase

; After XMANAGER exits, retrieve the value of the name
; property attribute from the state structure.
result = (N_ELEMENTS(*state.pName)) ? *state.pName : origName

; Free the pointer.
PTR_FREE, state.pName

; Return the new value of the name property attribute.
RETURN, result

```

END

Discussion

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss the IDL widget programming techniques used in this example. For more information on widget programming, see the *Building IDL Applications* manual. Several points are worth noting, however.

- The widget ID of the top-level base retrieved in the `SrvExample` routine is passed to this routine, and used as the value of the `GROUP_LEADER` keyword to `WIDGET_BASE`. This ensures that if the `iTool` itself is minimized or closed while the example dialog is displayed, it will be handled properly.
- The original value of the `NAME` property is passed to this routine, and is stored in an IDL pointer variable within the state structure that is associated with the dialog. This allows the event routine that actually retrieves the value entered by the user to communicate the new value back to the widget creation routine, but it also means that the pointer must be freed before the routine exits.

Event-handling Routines

The following event-handling procedures handle widget events generated by the widget interface that is displayed when the `SrvExample` user interface service is called.

```

PRO wdSrvExample_ok, event

    ; Get the stashed state structure from the user value
    ; of the top-level base widget.
    WIDGET_CONTROL, event.top, GET_UVALUE = state

    ; Get the value from the editable text field.
    WIDGET_CONTROL, state.wEdit, GET_VALUE = value

    ; Store the text value in a pointer so we can access
    ; it from the main routine
    *state.pName = value

    ; Destroy the dialog.
    WIDGET_CONTROL, event.top, /DESTROY

END

PRO wdSrvExample_cancel, event

    ; Nothing to do, just destroy the dialog.
    WIDGET_CONTROL, event.top, /DESTROY

END

```

Discussion

When the user clicks the OK button, the current value of the editable text widget is placed in the pointer stored in the state structure's `pName` field.

Creating an Operation that Calls the Service

In order to launch the `SrvExample` user interface service, the user must be able to select an operation that calls the `DoUIService` method. This example uses an `IDLitDataOperation` named `opName`, which simply retrieves the list of currently selected items and calls the `SrvExample` user interface service. The code for this operation is stored in a file named `opname__define.pro` that is located in a directory that is included in the IDL `!PATH` system variable.

```

FUNCTION opName::Init, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

    ; Initialize the operation, setting the "show UI" property.
    ; Note that this operation will operate on all iTool
    ; component types.
    success = self->IDLitDataOperation::Init( $
        NAME="Rename Component", $
        DESCRIPTION="Rename an iTool component", $
        /SHOW_EXECUTION_UI, TYPES='', _EXTRA=_extra)

    RETURN, success

END

FUNCTION opName::DoExecuteUI

    ; Get a reference to the current iTool and
    ; make sure it is valid.
    oTool = self->GetTool()
    IF (oTool eq OBJ_NEW()) THEN RETURN, 0

    ; Get the list of selected items.
    selItem = oTool->GetSelectedItems()

    ; Call the UI service on the first item in the list
    ; of selected items.
    RETURN, oTool->DoUIService('Example Service', selItem[0])

END

```

```

PRO opName__define

    struct = {opName, $
              inherits IDLitDataOperation $
            }

END

```

Discussion

Only two methods are required: `Init` and `DoExecuteUI`. Since this operation is based on the `IDLitDataOperation` class, all interaction with the `iTools` undo/redo system is automated.

Even though all of the items that are currently selected in the `iTool` are retrieved by the `GetSelectedItems` method, only the first item is passed to the `SrvExample` user interface service for processing. Handling multiple selected items would require a more complicated user interface.

The process of defining an `IDLitDataOperation` is discussed in detail in [Chapter 7](#), “Creating an Operation”.

Registering the SrvExample Service

In order for the `SrvExample` user interface service to be available, it must be registered with the current `iTool`. The following line in the `iTool`’s launch routine allows the service to be called with the name “Example Service”:

```
ITREGISTER, 'Example Service', 'srvExample', /UI_SERVICE
```

Registering the opName Operation

To use the `opName` operation within an `iTool`, the operation must be registered in the `iTool`’s definition. The following statement registers the operation with the name “Property Name” and places it in the `Operations` menu of the `iTool`.

```
self->RegisterOperation, 'Property Name', 'opName', $
    IDENTIFIER = 'Operations/PropertyName'
```

Invoking the opName Operation

To use the `SrvExample` service, the user would launch an `iTool` for which the `opName` operation is registered, select an `iTool` component in the window, and select **Property Name** from the **Operations** menu.



Chapter 14

Creating a User Interface Panel

This chapter describes the process of creating a user interface panel.

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|-----|
| Overview of the iTool UI Panel | 312 | Registering a UI Panel | 320 |
| Creating a UI Panel Interface | 313 | Example: A Simple UI Panel | 322 |
| Creating Callback Routines | 318 | | |

Overview of the iTool UI Panel

A *UI Panel* is a collection of user interface elements displayed in one or more tabs located on the right, left, or bottom edge of an iTool window. The UI panel interface makes it easy to attach a set of controls chosen by the iTool developer to the standard iTool interface.

Note

In the initial iTools release, only one user interface style is supplied: the IDL widget interface toolkit. As a result, UI panels consist of widgets from the IDL graphical user interface toolkit, displayed in a tab widget. As the iTools framework continues to grow, additional user interface styles may be created either by RSI or by third-party developers.

Controls on a UI panel exchange information with the iTool itself via one or more *callback routines*. These routines allow the iTool to modify the controls in the UI panel as the user selects different visualization components or otherwise changes the contents of the visualization.

Creating and Using a UI Panel

To add a UI panel to the iTool interface, you will do the following:

- Create an IDL procedure that creates the user interface elements that comprise the panel. See [“Creating a UI Panel Interface”](#) on page 313 for details.
- Create one or more event-handling routines to handle events generated by the user interface elements in the panel. See [“Creating a UI Panel Interface”](#) on page 313 for details.
- Create one or more callback routines to control the display of the items on the panel as the contents of the iTool window change. See [“Creating Callback Routines”](#) on page 318 for details.
- Create an iTool with the TYPES property set to the appropriate iTool type and register the UI panel with the iTool that will display it. See [“Registering a UI Panel”](#) on page 320 for details.

Creating a UI Panel Interface

It is beyond the scope of this manual to provide general information on the creation of user interfaces. For information on creating a user interface using the IDL widget toolkit, see “[Creating Graphical User Interfaces in IDL](#)” in the *Building IDL Applications* manual. Keep the following points in mind when creating IDL widget interface code for iTool user interface panels.

Panel Creation Routines

A user interface panel creation routine is similar to the widget creation routine that creates a standalone widget application, but with the following important differences:

Signature

The routine signature of a user interface panel looks like this:

```
PRO PanelName, wPanel, oUI
```

where *PanelName* is the name of the routine, *wPanel* is an input argument that contains the widget ID of the panel widget associated with this panel, and *oUI* is an input argument that contains an object reference to the IDLitUI object associated with the iTool that includes the user interface panel.

Event Loop and Widget Management

Standalone widget applications must arrange for the *management* of their widgets and the creation of an *event loop*; these details are usually handled by the XMANAGER or WIDGET_EVENT routines. A user interface panel does not need to call XMANAGER or WIDGET_EVENT; widget management is handled by the main iTool interface code. A user interface panel simply attaches itself to the bulk of the iTool interface.

About the Panel Widget

In the initial release of the iTools, user interface panels are contained in an IDL tab widget displayed on the right side of the iTool window. We will refer to this tab widget as the *panel widget* in this documentation, since all user interface elements in a UI panel are contained in this widget.

The panel widget itself is created automatically when a user interface panel is registered with an iTool, and its widget ID is passed to the panel creation routine along with a reference to the iTool user interface object.

Use the widget ID of the panel widget to set the title of the tab that appears at the top of the panel. For example the following lines might occur at the beginning of a routine that builds a user interface panel:

```
PRO ExamplePanel, wPanel, oUI

    ; Set the title used on the panel's tab.
    WIDGET_CONTROL, wPanel, BASE_SET_TITLE='Example Panel'

    ... more panel code.
```

The `wPanel` argument contains the widget ID of the panel widget, which was assigned when the `iTool` interface was built. The `oUI` argument contains an object reference to the `IDLitUI` object associated with the current `iTool`. The call to the `WIDGET_CONTROL` procedure sets the title of the tab to be “Example Panel.”

You may also find it useful to specify a single event-handling routine for all events generated by the panel widget. You can specify the name of this routine with a statement similar to the following:

```
WIDGET_CONTROL, wPanel, EVENT_PRO = 'ExamplePanel_event'
```

where `ExamplePanel_event` is replaced by the name of the event-handling routine you create for your panel. Of course, you can also specify event-handling routines for specific widgets within the panel using the `EVENT_PRO` and `EVENT_FUNC` keywords to the widget creation routines.

Registering the Panel with the User Interface Object

To ensure that notifications from the `iTool` itself are passed to the user interface panel as needed, the panel creation routine must register the panel widget with the `iTool` user interface object. This registration step allows you to specify the name of the *callback routine* that will be called when a notification is generated by the `iTool` itself.

To register a user interface panel, use the `RegisterWidget` method of the `IDLitUI` object:

```
idObserver = oUI->RegisterWidget(wPanel, 'Panel', 'Ex_callback')
```

where `oUI` is an object reference to the `IDLitUI` object and `wPanel` is the widget ID of the panel widget; both are passed in as arguments to the panel creation routine. The second argument to the `RegisterWidget` method (`'Panel'`, in this example) is the human-readable name of the UI panel. The third argument (`'Ex_callback'`, in this example) is the name of the panel’s callback routine. See “[IDLitUI::RegisterWidget](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for details. Callback routines are discussed in detail in “[Creating Callback Routines](#)” on page 318.

Adding Observers

For notification messages to be passed to the correct callback routine, an `OnNotifyObserver` must be established by calling the `AddOnNotifyObserver` method of the `IDLitUI` object. The `AddOnNotifyObserver` method takes as its arguments the ID created by the call to the `RegisterWidget` method (as discussed in the previous section) and the component object identifier of the `iTool` component to observe. Once the observer is created, each time the specified `iTool` component generates a message (that is, when the component itself calls the `DoOnNotify` method), the registered widget callback routine is called with the message as one of its arguments. The call to the `AddOnNotifyObserver` method looks like:

```
oUI->AddOnNotifyObserver, idObserver, idSubject
```

where `idObserver` is an identifier created by a call to the `RegisterWidget` method, and `idSubject` is usually the component object identifier of the `iTool` component being observed. See “`IDLitUI::AddOnNotifyObserver`” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

The `idSubject` argument to the `AddOnNotifyObserver` method is normally the object identifier of an `iTool` component object, but it can be any string value. For example, any time the selection within an `iTool` window changes, the `DoOnNotify` method is called with its first parameter (`idOriginator`) set to the string value `'Visualization'` rather than to the object identifier of a component. An observer whose `idSubject` argument is set to the string `'Visualization'` will be notified each time the selection changes in the `iTool` window. For example, the following statement specifies that the panel widget (as registered via the `RegisterWidget` method) will receive notifications whenever a visualization changes in the `iTool` window.

```
oUI->AddOnNotifyObserver, idObserver, 'Visualization'
```

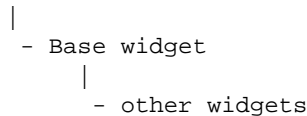
Here, `idObserver` is the identifier created in the previous section. The second argument (`'Visualization'`) specifies that messages will be generated whenever a visualization is modified.

“[Example: A Simple UI Panel](#)” on page 322 provides examples of observers of both types. See “[iTool Messaging System](#)” on page 41 for background information on observers and messages.

Create the Widget Hierarchy

The widget hierarchy of a user interface panel looks like the following:

```
Panel widget
```



Since the widget ID of the panel widget is supplied as an argument to the panel creation routine, all that is left is to create a base widget with the panel widget as its parent, and to populate the base widgets with other widgets as necessary.

Passing State Information

State information can be passed between widget creation routines and widget event handling routines in several different ways. The method used most often in iTool user interface panels is to create a state structure in the panel creation routine, store the appropriate values in this structure, and assign the structure to the widget user value of one of the widgets in the panel widget hierarchy. For a more detailed discussion of this technique, see [“Managing Application State”](#) in Chapter 28 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual.

In addition to widget IDs and other state information from your widget interface, you may find it useful to store object references to the iTool object and to the IDLitUI object associated with the iTool object in the state structure. Having these object references available in your event handler and callback routines allows you to take advantage of methods available in the iTool and user interface objects.

Create Event Handlers

Like other widget applications, iTool user interface panels use one or more event handling routines to perform actions based on the user’s interaction with the widgets in the interface. As with generalized widget applications, you can write event handling routines for a user interface panel in numerous ways; see [“Widget Event Processing”](#) in Chapter 28 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for an in-depth discussion of widget event handling.

The following suggestions apply specifically to event handlers for iTool user interface panels:

Use the GetSelectedItems Method

Often, you will want to apply an operation to one or more items in the iTool window when the user selects an element on the user interface panel. Use the GetSelectedItems method of the iTool object to retrieve references to the iTool component objects that are selected.

The following statement retrieves an array of object references to all of the currently selected items in the `iTool`:

```
oTargets = state.oTool->GetSelectedItems(COUNT = nTarg)
```

Note

Note that this example assumes that a reference to the `iTool` object is stored in the `oTool` field of the `state` structure variable. The `COUNT` keyword to the `GetSelectedItems` method returns the number of items selected.

Use the DoAction Method

In many cases, the user's interaction with the user interface panel will instruct the `iTool` to apply an `iTool` operation to the selected item. Where possible, use the `DoAction` method of the operation to perform this task. Calling the `DoAction` method ensures that the changes caused by the operation are properly inserted into the `iTool` undo/redo system.

For example, the following statement:

```
success = state.oUI->DoAction('Operations/Rotate/RotateLeft')
```

calls the `DoAction` method on the `IDLitUI` object associated with the current `iTool`, invoking the operation registered with the system with the operation identifier `'Operations/Rotate/RotateLeft'`.

Redraw the iTool Window

Call the `RefreshCurrentWindow` method of the `iTool` object to force the `iTool`'s window to update, displaying any changes that took place as the result of the operations executed in your event handling routine:

```
state.oTool->RefreshCurrentWindow
```

Note

Note that this example assumes that a reference to the `iTool` object is stored in the `oTool` field of the `state` structure variable.

Creating Callback Routines

User interface panel callback routines are executed when an iTool component, for which the panel has created an *observer*, generates a *notification message*. The callback routine then uses the value of the notification message to determine what action to take. Observers are created as described in [“Adding Observers”](#) on page 315.

Callback Routine Signature

A user interface panel widget callback routine has the following signature:

```
PRO PanelName_callback, wPanel, IdOriginator, IdMessage, Value
```

where:

- *PanelName_callback* is the name of the callback routine,
- *wPanel* is the widget ID of the panel widget (see [“About the Panel Widget”](#) on page 313),
- *IdOriginator* is a string identifying the source of the message (usually the object identifier of an iTool component object, but it can be any string value),
- *IdMessage* is a string that uniquely identifies the message being sent, and
- *Value* is a value that is associated with the message being sent.

See [“iTool Messaging System”](#) on page 41 for more information on the *IdMessage* and *Value* arguments.

Registration of Callback Routines

Callback routines are registered along with the user interface panel itself, in the call to the RegisterWidget method of the IDLitUI object. See [“Registering the Panel with the User Interface Object”](#) on page 314 for details.

Retrieving Widget State Information

The *wPanel* argument to the callback routine contains the widget ID of the panel widget. This widget ID provides a way for the callback routine to retrieve state information about the widgets that make up the panel.

For example, if you have saved a state structure containing widget information in the user value of the first child widget of the panel widget, code similar to the following would allow you to retrieve that state structure:

```
; Make sure we have a valid widget ID.  
IF ~ WIDGET_INFO(wPanel, /VALID) THEN RETURN  
  
; Retrieve the widget ID of the first child widget of  
; the UI panel.  
wChild = WIDGET_INFO(wPanel, /CHILD)  
  
; Retrieve the state structure from the user value of  
; the first child widget.  
WIDGET_CONTROL, wChild, GET_UVALUE = state
```

This technique is used in the example user interface panel described in [“Example: A Simple UI Panel”](#) on page 322.

Registering a UI Panel

User interface panels are registered with the iTool system using the ITREGISTER procedure. Once a UI panel has been registered, it will be displayed for any iTool whose TYPE property matches the string specified via the TYPES keyword when registering the panel. Similarly, if an iTool displays a visualization whose TYPE property matches the string specified via the TYPES keyword when registering the panel, the panel will be displayed for that iTool.

Registering the Panel in the iTool Launch Routine

In most cases, you will register your user interface panel in an iTool's launch routine, with a statement like:

```
ITREGISTER, panelName, panelCode, TYPES = panelType, /UI_PANEL
```

where *panelName* is a string containing the human-readable name of your user interface panel, *panelCode* is a string containing the name of the IDL procedure that creates the user interface panel, and *panelType* is a string that identifies the type of iTool or visualization for which the panel should be displayed. The UI_PANEL keyword must be present in order to register a user interface panel using the ITREGISTER procedure.

See “ITREGISTER” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details.

About the TYPE property

To display a user interface panel for a given iTool, you will not only need to register the panel in that iTool's launch routine, but also specify a matching type when initializing the iTool itself. The iTool system will display a registered panel in an iTool whose TYPE property contains a string that matches the string specified via the TYPES keyword when registering the panel.

To set the TYPE property of an iTool use a statement like this in the iTool's Init method:

```
self->IDLitToolbase::Init(_EXTRA = _extra, TYPE = panelType)
```

where *panelType* is a string that matches the string used as the value of the TYPES keyword to ITREGISTER.

Similarly, the iTool system will display a registered panel when an iTool displays a visualization whose TYPE property contains a string that matches the string specified via the TYPES keyword when registering the panel.

To set the TYPE property of a visualization, use a statement like this in the visualization's Init method:

```
self->IDLitVisualization::Init(_EXTRA = _extra, TYPE = panelType)
```

where *panelType* is a string that matches the string used as the value of the TYPES keyword to ITREGISTER.

Example: A Simple UI Panel

The following example creates a simple user interface panel consisting of two buttons: Rotate and Hide/Show. The Rotate button rotates the selected iTool component 90 degrees, if possible. The Hide/Show button toggles the value of the HIDE property of the selected object.

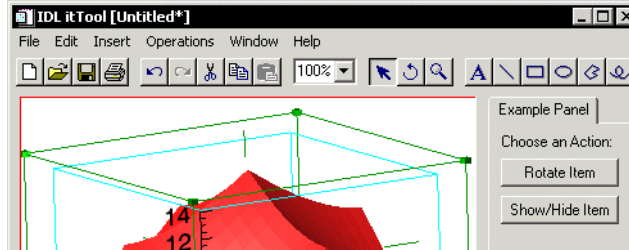


Figure 14-1: The example panel.

Note

This example is intended to demonstrate the concepts involved in creating a user interface panel. For examples of more useful panels, see the files `idlitwdimgmenu.pro` and `idlitwdvolmenu.pro`, which create the user interface panels for the IIMAGE and IVOLUME iTools, respectively. Both files are located in the `lib/itools/ui_widgets` subdirectory of the IDL installation directory.

To display a user interface panel named *Example4_panel*, this example creates the following items:

- [Panel Creation Routine](#)
- [Panel Event Handler Routine](#)
- [Panel Callback Routine](#)
- [Panel Type Specification](#)

Example Code

The code for this example user interface panel is included in the file `example4_panel.pro` in the `examples/doc/itools` subdirectory of the IDL

distribution. Enter

```
example4tool
```

at the IDL prompt to create an instance of an `iTool` that displays the panel. Open the file in any text editor or enter

```
.edit example4_panel
```

at the IDLDE prompt to open the `.pro` file in the IDL editor.

Panel Creation Routine

The user interface panel creation routine (beginning with the line `PRO Example4_panel, wPanel, oUI`) does the work of displaying the IDL widgets that make up the UI panel display.

```
PRO Example4_panel, wPanel, oUI

; Set the title used on the panel's tab.
WIDGET_CONTROL, wPanel, BASE_SET_TITLE = 'Example Panel'

; Specify the event handler
WIDGET_CONTROL, wPanel, EVENT_PRO = "Example4_panel_event"

; Register the panel with the user interface object.
strObserverIdentifier = oUI->RegisterWidget(wPanel, "Panel", $
    'Example4_panel_callback')
; Register to receive selection events on visualizations.
oUI->AddOnNotifyObserver, strObserverIdentifier, $
    'Visualization'

; Retrieve a reference to the current iTool.
oTool = oUI->GetTool()

; Create a base widget to hold the contents of the panel.
wBase = WIDGET_BASE(wPanel, /COLUMN, SPACE = 5, /ALIGN_LEFT)

; Create panel contents.
wLabel = WIDGET_LABEL(wBase, VALUE = "Choose an Action:", $
    /ALIGN_LEFT)

; Get the Operation ID of the rotate operation. If the operation
; exists, create the "Rotate Item" button and monitor whether
; the operation is available for the selected item.
```

```

opID = 'Operations/Operations/Rotate/RotateLeft'
oRotate = oTool->GetByIdentifier(opID)

IF (OBJ_VALID(oRotate)) THEN BEGIN
    idRotate = oRotate->GetFullIdentifier()
    wRotate = WIDGET_BUTTON(wBase, VALUE = "Rotate Item", $
        UVALUE="ROTATE" )
    ; Monitor for availability of the Rotate operation.
    oUI->AddOnNotifyObserver, strObserverIdentifier, idRotate
ENDIF ELSE $
    idRotate = 0

wHide = WIDGET_BUTTON(wBase, VALUE = "Show/Hide Item", $
    UVALUE = "HIDE")

; Pack up the state structure and store in first child.
state = {oTool:oTool, $
    oUI:oUI, $
    idRotate : idRotate, $
    wPanel:wPanel, $
    wBase:wBase, $
    wRotate:wRotate, $
    wHide:wHide $
}
wChild = WIDGET_INFO(wPanel, /CHILD)

IF wChild NE 0 THEN $
    WIDGET_CONTROL, wChild, SET_UVALUE = state, /NO_COPY

END

```

Discussion

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to describe the IDL widget concepts employed in the Example4_panel example; the comments in the code that creates the user interface panel describe most of the features. The following points are worth noting, however:

- The panel creation routine accepts two arguments: the widget ID of the panel widget (stored in the variable `wPanel`, in this example), and an object reference to the `IDLitUI` object associated with the `iTool` (stored in the variable `oUI`).
- The example uses the `EVENT_PRO` keyword to the `WIDGET_CONTROL` procedure to establish an event-handling routine, `Example4_panel_event`. This event-handling routine is described in [“Panel Event Handler Routine”](#) on page 325.

- The example registers a single callback routine, `Example4_panel_callback`, using the `RegisterWidget` method of the `IDLitUI` class. The callback routine is described in “[Panel Callback Routine](#)” on page 327.
- The example adds an `OnNotifyObserver` for the `Visualization` component described in “[Adding Observers](#)” on page 315.
- The example uses the `GetTool` method of the `IDLitUI` object to retrieve an object reference to the `iTool` with which the panel is associated. This reference is later used to retrieve a reference to the `IDLitOperation` object that performs the `Rotate Left` operation, placing it in the variable `oRotate`.
- If the `Rotate Left` operation is available to the `iTool`, the example places the `Rotate` button on the user interface panel. It also establishes an observer to watch for changes in the availability of the `Rotate Left` operation, which will change based on the item selected. The callback routine uses the messages received by this observer to sensitize and desensitize the `Rotate` button as necessary.
- The example packages important information in a state structure, and assigns this structure to the user value of the first child widget of the panel widget. The event-handling and callback routines will retrieve this state structure and use the information contained therein.

Panel Event Handler Routine

The event-handler routine (beginning with the line `PRO Example4_panel_event, event`) receives widget events generated by the widgets that make up the user interface panel, and acts accordingly.

```
PRO Example4_panel_event, event

    ; Retrieve the widget ID of the first child widget of
    ; the UI panel.
    wChild = WIDGET_INFO(event.handler, /CHILD)

    ; Retrieve the state structure from the user value of
    ; the first child widget.
    WIDGET_CONTROL, wChild, GET_UVALUE = state

    ; Retrieve the user value of the widget that generated
    ; the event.
    WIDGET_CONTROL, event.id, GET_UVALUE = uvalue

    ; Now do the work for each panel item.
```

```

SWITCH STRUPCASE(uvalue) OF
  'ROTATE': BEGIN
    ; Apply the Rotate Left operation to the selected item.
    success = state.oUI->DoAction(state.idRotate)
    RETURN
  END
  'HIDE': BEGIN
    ; Hide the selected item.
    ;
    oTargets = state.oTool->GetSelectedItems(count = nTarg)
    IF nTarg GT 0 THEN BEGIN
      ; If there are selected items, use only the last item
      ; selected, which is stored in the first element of
      ; the returned array.
      oTarget = oTargets[0]
      ; Get the iTool identifier of the selected item.
      name = oTarget->GetFullIdentifier()
      ; Retrieve the setting of the HIDE property.
      oTarget->GetProperty, HIDE = hide
      ; Change the value of the HIDE property from 0 to 1
      ; or from 1 to 0. Use the DoSetProperty and
      ; CommitActions method to ensure that the change
      ; is entered into the undo/redo transaction buffer.
      void = state.oTool->DoSetProperty(name, "HIDE", $
        ((hide+1) MOD 2))
      state.oTool->CommitActions
    ENDIF
    BREAK
  END
ELSE:
ENDSWITCH

; Refresh the iTool window.
state.oTool->RefreshCurrentWindow

END

```

Discussion

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to describe the IDL widget concepts employed in the `Example4_panel` event handler; the comments in the code describe most of the features. The following points are worth noting, however:

- If the event received by the event handler routine is generated by the `Rotate` button, the example calls the `DoAction` method of the `IDLitUI` object, with the identifier of the `Rotate Left` operation as its argument.

- If the event received by the event handler routine is generated by the Hide/Show button, the example does the following:
 - Use the reference to the `iTool` object stored in the state structure to retrieve the list of selected items using the `GetSelectedItems` method.
 - Retrieve the object identifier of the last item selected. (Note that the last item selected is stored in the first element of the returned array.)
 - Retrieve the value of the `HIDE` property of the selected item.
 - Use the `DoSetProperty` method of the `IDLitTool` object to toggle the value of the `HIDE` property for the selected item.
 - Commit the property change in the undo/redo transaction buffer using the `CommitActions` method of the `IDLitTool` object.
- After the `iTool` display has been changed, call the `RefreshCurrentWindow` method of the `IDLitTool` object to redraw the `iTool` window.

Panel Callback Routine

The user interface panel callback routine is called whenever a component, for which an `OnNotifyObserver` has been registered, generates a message. It parses the message received and takes action as necessary.

```

PRO Example4_panel_callback, wPanel, strID, messageIn, component

; Make sure we have a valid widget ID.
IF ~ WIDGET_INFO(wPanel, /VALID) THEN RETURN

; Retrieve the widget ID of the first child widget of
; the UI panel.
wChild = WIDGET_INFO(wPanel, /CHILD)

; Retrieve the state structure from the user value of
; the first child widget.
WIDGET_CONTROL, wChild, GET_UVALUE = state

; Process as necessary, depending on the message received.
SWITCH STRUPCASE(messageIn) OF

; This section handles messages generated when the rotate
; operation becomes available or unavailable, and sensitizes
; or desensitizes the "Rotate" button accordingly.
'SENSITIVE':
'UNSENSITIVE': BEGIN
    WIDGET_CONTROL, state.wRotate, $
        SENSITIVE = (messageIn EQ 'SENSITIVE')

```

```

        BREAK
    END

    ; This section handles messages generated when the
    ; item selected in the iTool window changes and changes
    ; the sensitivity of the "Hide/Show" and "Rotate" buttons
    ; accordingly.
    'SELECTIONCHANGED': BEGIN
        ; Retrieve the item that was selected last, which is
        ; stored in the first element of the returned array.
        oSel = state.oTool->GetSelectedItems()
        oSel = oSel[0]
        ; If the last item selected is not a visualization,
        ; desensitize the "Hide/Show" and "Rotate" buttons.
        IF (~OBJ_ISA(oSel, 'IDLITVISUALIZATION')) THEN BEGIN
            WIDGET_CONTROL, state.wHide, SENSITIVE = 0
            WIDGET_CONTROL, state.wRotate, SENSITIVE = 0
        ENDIF ELSE BEGIN
            ; If the selected object is a visualization, sensitize
            ; the "Hide/Show" and "Rotate" buttons.
            WIDGET_CONTROL, state.wHide, SENSITIVE = 1
            WIDGET_CONTROL, state.wRotate, SENSITIVE = 1
        ENDELSE
        BREAK
    END
    ELSE:
ENDSWITCH

END

```

Discussion

The example panel's callback routine performs the following tasks:

- Uses the widget ID provided in the `wPanel` argument to retrieve the widget state structure stored in the first child widget of the panel widget.
- If the value of the `messageIn` argument is either `SENSITIVE` or `UNSENSITIVE`, change the sensitivity of the `Rotate` button (stored in the `wRotate` field of the widget state structure) as necessary.
- If the value of the `messageIn` argument is `SELECTIONCHANGED`, perform the following tasks:
 - Use the reference to the `iTool` object stored in the `oTool` field of the state structure to retrieve a reference to the last selected component. (Note that the last object selected is stored in the first element of the returned array.)

- If the selected component is not a visualization, desensitize the Hide/Show button.
- If the selected component is a visualization, sensitize the Hide/Show button.

Panel Type Specification

In order to display the `Example4_panel` user interface panel along with an `iTool`, the following two things must happen:

1. The UI panel must be registered, using the `ITREGISTER` procedure.
2. A tool with the appropriate `TYPE` must be created.

For the purposes of this example, we will create an `iTool` named `example4tool`, with a launch routine named `example4tool.pro`, and an `iTool` object definition routine named `example4tool__define.pro`.

Example Code

Both `example4tool.pro`, and `example4tool__define.pro` are included in the `examples/doc/itools` subdirectory of the IDL distribution.

In the `example4tool.pro` file, we included the following statement:

```
ITREGISTER, 'Example Panel', 'Example4_panel', TYPE = 'EXAMPLE', $
/UI_PANEL
```

Setting the `TYPE` keyword equal to the string `EXAMPLE` specifies that the panel should be displayed for all `iTools` of this type.

In the `example4tool__define.pro` file, we include the string `EXAMPLE` in the `TYPE` property specified in the `Init` method:

```
FUNCTION example4tool::Init, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

IF (self->IDLitToolbase::Init(_EXTRA = _extra, $
                               TYPE = 'EXAMPLE') EQ 0) $

THEN RETURN, 0
```

Since the `TYPE` specified for the user interface panel in the call to `ITREGISTER` matches the `TYPE` defined for our example `iTool` class, calling the launch routine `example4tool` at the IDL Command Line creates a new `iTool` and displays the `Example4_panel` panel on the right side of the `iTool` window.

Chapter 15

Creating a Custom iTool Widget Interface

This chapter describes the process of creating an iTool user interface using IDL widgets.

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About Custom iTool Widget Interfaces

The standard interface to the iTools included with IDL is constructed from IDL widgets, using a number of special compound widgets designed to work with the iTool system. Other chapters in this section of the *iTool Developer's Guide* describe how to use the user interface display mechanisms of the iTool system to add functionality to your own iTools within the constraints of the standard iTool interface. [This chapter](#) describes how to create a hybrid iTool interface using both iTool compound widgets and “traditional” IDL widgets.

Before beginning the process of creating a new IDL widget-based user interface that includes iTool components, you should take the following points into consideration:

- You can use a custom iTool user interface to mix iTool components with traditional IDL widgets, but *you will still be using the iTool system*. This means that the custom interface you create is the interface to an iTool, not simply to a collection of widgets. You may need to create an iTool class definition for your tool, register iTool components, and handle user interface callbacks.
- The mechanisms available for interacting with iTool components such as the iTool draw window from outside the iTools framework are more limited (and in some cases more cumbersome) than those available if you write iTool framework code.
- While the standard interface to the iTools uses IDL widgets, the iTools framework and the standard iTools are designed in such a way that a non-widget iTool interface (e.g. a Java or web-based interface) could be created and the standard iTools would work seamlessly with the new interface. Custom iTool interfaces that rely on traditional IDL widgets will only function in environments that support the display of IDL widgets.

Why Create a New Widget Interface?

In most cases, you will be able to extend the iTool system to include your own functionality without modifying the standard iTool user interface. You can create and register new operations, for example, without writing any interface code at all. If your application requires extra interface elements not present in the standard interface, you can include them in a user interface panel associated with your tool. So why create a new interface using IDL widgets? The following are two possible reasons to create a custom interface:

You are updating an existing application — You may have an existing widget application that uses a traditional draw widget to display visualizations. Replacing

the traditional draw widget with an iTool draw widget will require substantial revisions to your existing code, but making the revisions may be more efficient than recreating your application using only the iTool framework.

Your application has a complex interface — Your application may require a more complex user interface than is possible to implement using iTool framework methods.

What About Using a UI Panel?

Several of the standard iTools require tool-specific user interface elements. These iTools (the IIMAGE, IMAP, and IVOLUME tools) include a user interface panel that contains additional interface elements required by the tool.

If your application requires a small number of interface elements not available in the standard interface, consider creating a user interface panel rather than an entire custom user interface. Creating a user interface panel rather than a custom user interface has the following advantages:

- It is easier, and requires less interface code. You do not need to write code to handle widget resizing, for example.
- You can register your user interface panel with the iTool system, which allows the panel to appear on any iTool of the type supported by the panel. You could, for example, create a panel that would show up on the standard IIMAGE tool, along with the existing panel.

User interface panels are discussed in detail in [Chapter 14, “Creating a User Interface Panel”](#).

Skills Required to Create an iTool User Interface

To create a custom iTool user interface, you will need to be familiar with the following:

- Traditional IDL widget programming (see [Chapter 28, “Creating Widget Applications”](#) in the *Building IDL Applications* manual).
- Creating an iTool (see [Chapter 5, “Creating an iTool”](#)).
- Creating user interface callback routines (see [Chapter 14, “Creating a User Interface Panel”](#)).
- Routines and methods available for interacting with iTool components from outside the iTool framework (see [Appendix A, “Controlling iTools from the IDL Command Line”](#)).

- Use of the iTool compound widgets (see [Appendix B, “iTool Compound Widgets”](#)).

What You Will Need to Create

To build a custom iTool user interface, you will need to create a minimum of two new `.pro` files:

- The widget interface definition. This file creates the widget interface, defines event handlers and callbacks, takes care of widget resizing and cleanup, and registers the widgets with a user interface object.
- A launch routine. This file registers the custom interface with the iTools system and launches the iTool with the specified interface.

You may create any number of other additional files, but in most cases you will also create:

- An iTool class definition routine. This file creates an instance of the iTool that will use your custom interface. The iTool class definition may simply subclass an existing iTool class, registering new items or unregistering some of the standard items, or it may be an entirely new iTool of your creation.

Note

While you can create an iTool interface that mimics an existing application’s traditional widget interface, you cannot simply add iTool compound widgets to an existing widget interface. The iTool compound widgets rely on the iTool system, and will not function on their own.

Overview of Creating an iTool Interface

This section provides a brief outline of the steps necessary to create a custom iTool interface. The topics introduced here are discussed in greater detail in later sections of this chapter.

To create a custom iTool interface, you will do the following:

1. [Create or Choose an iTool](#)
2. [Create the Widget Interface](#)
3. [Create Event Handlers](#)
4. [Create Callback Routines](#)
5. [Create a Cleanup Routine](#)
6. [Create an iTool User Interface Object](#)
7. [Create an iTool Launch Routine](#)

Create or Choose an iTool

The interface you will create is the interface to an iTool. While you may choose to create a new interface to an existing iTool, it is more likely that you will be creating an interface to a custom iTool that you have defined. Even if you simply want to insert an iTool draw window into an existing widget interface, you will probably want to specify which of the standard iTool operations, menu items, and toolbars are included — this means creating and registering a new iTool definition routine. See [Chapter 5, “Creating an iTool”](#) for a complete description of the process of creating your own iTool.

Create the Widget Interface

You will use traditional IDL widget programming techniques to create the interface used by your iTool. iTool components such as menus, toolbars, status bars, and iTool draw windows are encapsulated in a special set of compound widgets that you can add to your interface just like other widgets.

Note

iTool compound widgets are not exactly like other compound widgets. They do not generate widget events, and you cannot get or set their values using the `WIDGET_CONTROL` routine.

Create Event Handlers

While you do not need to handle the widget events that are internal to the iTool compound widgets, you will need to create event handlers for any other widgets you include in your interface. You will also need to provide event-handling code for the following:

- Resizing of the iTool compound widgets. This is generally accomplished by calling the `_RESIZE` procedure associated with the compound widget.
- Destruction of the iTool. In order to properly shut down the iTool system when your iTool exits, you must call the iTools shutdown service in addition to freeing any pointers used by the widget interface.
- Focus changes. The iTool system needs to know which iTool is currently selected. When your user interface receives the keyboard focus, you must call the iTools set-as-current-tool service to alert the system that the iTool associated with your interface has become the current tool.

Create Callback Routines

Callback routines handle messages delivered by the iTool messaging system to your user interface. The number and type of callbacks your interface needs to handle will depend on the features your user interface implements.

Create a Cleanup Routine

If your custom interface uses pointers or other variables that require explicit cleanup when the application exits, you must provide a cleanup routine and specify it as the routine to be called when the widgets are destroyed.

Create an iTool User Interface Object

iTools communicate with their user interfaces via a user interface object. Your interface definition routine will need to create an interface object, register the widgets with the object, and add the widget interface as an observer of the user interface object.

Create an iTool Launch Routine

After creating the user interface definition routine, you will need to create an iTool launch routine that does the following (in addition to any other work):

- Registers your custom user interface with the iTool system, using the `ITREGISTER` procedure with the `USER_INTERFACE` keyword.
- Calls the `IDLITSYS_CREATETOOL` function with the `USER_INTERFACE` keyword set equal to the name of your custom interface, as registered with the iTool system.

iTool Widget Interface Concepts

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss the creation of IDL widget interfaces in general; see [Chapter 28, “Creating Widget Applications”](#) in the *Building IDL Applications* manual for a complete discussion. This section describes some things you will need to know about working with the iTool compound widgets that encapsulate the iTool components you can insert into your custom interface.

What Are iTool Compound Widgets?

iTool compound widgets are designed to allow complex iTool components to be included in an IDL widget interface in a way that is familiar to traditional IDL widget programmers. The following iTool compound widgets are available:

CW_ITMENU — Encapsulates a top-level iTool menu. Top-level iTool menus are defined by adding operations to the iTool hierarchy. See [“iTool Object Hierarchy”](#) on page 31 for information on the organization of the iTool hierarchy.

CW_ITPANEL — Encapsulates an iTool user interface panel. User interface panels allow you to easily add additional IDL widget interface elements to an iTool. In some cases, you may be able to accomplish what you need by adding a user interface panel rather than creating an entire custom user interface. See [Chapter 14, “Creating a User Interface Panel”](#) for information on creating panels.

CW_ITTOOLBAR — Encapsulates the iTool toolbar. Toolbars provide access to commonly used operations and manipulators via toolbar buttons. Toolbars are defined by adding operations to the iTool hierarchy. See [“iTool Object Hierarchy”](#) on page 31 for information on the organization of the iTool hierarchy.

CW_ITSTATUSBAR — Encapsulates the iTool status bar. The status bar typically provides user feedback for iTool components, but can be used to display any sort of message. See [“Status Messages”](#) on page 287 for information on using the status bar.

CW_ITWINDOW — Encapsulates the iTool drawable area. All of the functionality of the standard iTool window — mouse interactions, display of properties of the selected visualization, context menus — is included in the iTool drawable area.

Special Notes on the iTool Compound Widgets

The iTool compound widgets are designed to look and behave like traditional compound widgets in most ways, but there are several things you should be aware of when using them.

iTool compound widgets:

- require an object reference to an iTool user interface object on creation.
- do not generate widget events.
- do not have a value that can be retrieved or set.
- are able to receive and respond to selected messages from the iTool messaging system.

In addition, the `CW_ITPANEL`, `CW_ITSTATUSBAR`, and `CW_ITWINDOW` compound widgets must be resized using their associated `_RESIZE` procedures, rather than by explicitly setting the `XSIZE` and `YSIZE` keywords.

Example iTool Widget Interfaces

Two examples of functioning iTool widget interface code are included in the IDL distribution:

Example Custom iTool Widget Interface — A functioning custom iTool widget interface definition, an associated iTool class definition, and an associated launch routine are included in the `examples/doc/itools` subdirectory of the IDL distribution. The example interface is described in detail in [“Example: a Custom iTool Interface”](#) on page 360.

Standard iTool Widget Interface — The widget interface code used as the standard iTool interface is included in the IDL distribution in the file `idlitwdtool.pro`, in the `lib/itools/ui_widgets` subdirectory. The standard interface is used by all of the iTools included with IDL. Inspecting this file will give you insights into how the developers of the standard iTools intended the iTool compound widgets to be used, as well as other details.

Creating the Interface Routine

The IDL procedure that creates your custom iTool widget interface will look much like a widget creation routine from a traditional widget application. This section points out some things you should be aware of.

Note

Code fragments used in this section, and those that follow, are taken from the example custom interface developed in [“Example: a Custom iTool Interface”](#) on page 360.

Routine Signature

Your widget creation routine should be an IDL procedure with a signature that looks something like:

```
PRO example2_wdtool, oTool, TITLE = titleIn, $
    LOCATION = location, $
    VIRTUAL_DIMENSIONS = virtualDimensions, $
    USER_INTERFACE = oUI, $ ; output keyword
    _REF_EXTRA = _extra
```

where:

- `oTool` is an object reference to the iTool that will use the interface.
- `TITLE` is an optional keyword that specifies the title used for the iTool window.
- `LOCATION` is an optional keyword that specifies the location [x, y] in pixels on the screen where the upper left corner of the interface should be positioned on creation.
- `VIRTUAL_DIMENSIONS` is an optional keyword that specifies the virtual size of the iTool drawable area. Note that this size is not the same as the initial visible size.
- `USER_INTERFACE` is a *required* output keyword that returns an object reference to the iTool user interface object created by the interface routine.
- `_REF_EXTRA` is the standard keyword inheritance mechanism that allows the routine that calls your user interface routine to pass additional keyword values to the interface routine as needed.

Your routine may handle other keyword values as well.

Error Checking

Since the successful creation of an iTTool interface relies on the presence of a valid iTTool object reference, it is a good idea to check the `oTool` argument before proceeding. A statement like the following serves as a reasonable check:

```
IF (~OBJ_VALID(oTool)) THEN $
    MESSAGE, 'Tool is not a valid object.'
```

Top Level Base

The first widget you will need to create when building a custom iTTool widget interface is a top-level widget base to hold the interface. Your call to the `WIDGET_BASE` function should look something like:

```
wBase = WIDGET_BASE(/COLUMN, MBAR = wMenuBar, $
    TITLE = title, $
    /TLB_KILL_REQUEST_EVENTS, $
    /TLB_SIZE_EVENTS, $
    /KBRD_FOCUS_EVENTS, $
    _EXTRA = _extra)
```

All of the keywords shown here are documented along with the `WIDGET_BASE` function, but you should note the following things:

- We use the `MBAR` keyword to create a menubar base, which will hold both the iTTool menubars and any additional menus we choose to create. If your interface will not have a menu bar, there is no need to specify the `MBAR` keyword.
- We explicitly ask for `TLB_KILL_REQUEST_EVENTS`. This is important because it allows us to specify a `KILL_NOTIFY` procedure that will be executed when the widget interface is destroyed.
- We set the `TLB_SIZE_EVENTS` keyword to let the user resize the iTTool interface as described in [“Handling Resize Events”](#) on page 354.
- We use the keyword inheritance mechanism (the `_EXTRA` keyword) to pass any additional keyword values through to the base widget.

User Interface Object

Your widget interface must be associated with an iTTool user interface object. Since we will need the object reference to the user interface object when creating the iTTool

compound widgets, we include the following statement after creating our top level base widget:

```
oUI = OBJ_NEW('IDLitUI', oTool, GROUP_LEADER = wBase)
```

Note that we need the iTool object that was the argument to our interface creation routine to create the user interface object. Note also that we specify our top level base as the `GROUP_LEADER` of the interface object; this will ensure that any floating or modal dialogs displayed by the interface appear in the correct place.

Widget Creation and Layout

Your custom iTool interface can include both iTool compound widgets and traditional IDL widgets. These are created in the same way as in a traditional widget application. The finer points of creating iTool compound widgets are discussed in later sections of this chapter.

User Interface Registration

Near the end of the widget creation routine, after the widget hierarchy has been realized, we must register the top-level base with the user interface object:

```
myID = oUI->RegisterWidget(wBase, 'Example 2 Tool', $
    'example2_wdtool_callback')
```

Here we specify the name of the callback routine that will handle messages from the iTool components. The return value from the `RegisterWidget` method is the iTool full identifier of the widget interface. We next use the identifier to specify that the interface is an observer (that is, that it can receive messages generated by iTool components) for the associated iTool:

```
oUI->AddOnNotifyObserver, myID, oTool->GetFullIdentifier()
```

This ensures that messages generated by the iTool are handled by the specified callback routine.

Handling Widget Destruction

Many complex interfaces rely on a *state structure* containing information about the widgets in the interface. If you pass a reference to this state structure between routines in your user interface code using one or more pointers, free the pointers when the widget interface is destroyed. In our example interface, a pointer to the state structure is stored in the user value of the first child widget of the top level base widget. The following statement specifies a routine to be called when the widgets are destroyed:

```
WIDGET_CONTROL, wChild, KILL_NOTIFY = "example2_wdtool_cleanup"
```

Issues related to the destruction of the interface are discussed in more detail in [“Handling Shutdown Events”](#) on page 356.

Adding Menus

iTool menus are created using the `CW_ITMENU` compound widget. The signature of the `CW_ITMENU` function is:

```
Result = CW_ITMENU(Parent, UI, Target [, KEYWORDS])
```

where:

- *Parent* is the widget ID of the base widget on which the menu will be displayed.
- *UI* is the user interface object associated with the interface.
- *Target* is the iTool identifier, relative to the iTool associated with *UI*, of the container whose operations should be included in the menu.
- *KEYWORDS* are keywords either handled explicitly by the widget, or passed through to the widgets that make up the compound widget.

Standard Menus

Operations registered in the iTool containers that create the standard menus are automatically sensitized and desensitized to reflect whether the individual operation can be applied at the time the menu is displayed. Some items are sensitized when the selected item is of the correct data or visualization type, others (such as Undo and Redo) are sensitized when some other criteria are met. Still others (such as the Open operation on the File menu) are always available.

The following statements create the menus used by the standard iTools:

```
wFile      = CW_ITMENU(wMenubar, oUI, 'Operations/File')
wEdit      = CW_ITMENU(wMenubar, oUI, 'Operations/Edit')
wInsert    = CW_ITMENU(wMenubar, oUI, 'Operations/Insert')
wOperations = CW_ITMENU(wMenubar, oUI, 'Operations/Operations')
wWindow    = CW_ITMENU(wMenubar, oUI, 'Operations/Window')
wHelp      = CW_ITMENU(wMenubar, oUI, 'Operations/Help')
```

You can include any subset of these menus, or your own menus, in your interface.

Modifying Menu Contents

Each iTool menu contains an entry for each item that is *registered* in the container. This has two ramifications:

1. If you register a new operation in one of the standard menu containers, it will appear on the menu for your iTool, and be sensitized and desensitized according to the same rules as the other items.
2. If you unregister an operation from one of the standard menu containers, it will be removed from the menu for your iTool.

Operations are generally registered and unregistered in the `Init` method of an iTool creation routine. See [Chapter 7, “Creating an Operation”](#) for details. For an example that shows how to unregister standard menu items, see [“Example: a Custom iTool Interface”](#) on page 360.

Resizing Menus

Because menubars are treated as part of the top level base widget, no special resizing code is required to resize menus. If you are concerned that your menus always appear in a single line, you may want to consider setting a minimum width on your top level base sufficient to ensure that the menus never wrap to a second line.

Adding a Toolbar

iTool toolbars are created using the `CW_ITTOOLBAR` compound widget. The signature of the `CW_ITTOOLBAR` function is:

```
Result = CW_ITTOOLBAR(Parent, UI, Target [, KEYWORDS])
```

where:

- *Parent* is the widget ID of the base widget on which the toolbar will be displayed.
- *UI* is the user interface object associated with the interface.
- *Target* is the iTool identifier, relative to the iTool associated with *UI*, of the container whose operations or manipulators should be included in the toolbar.
- *KEYWORDS* are keywords either handled explicitly by the widget, or passed through to the widgets that make up the compound widget.

Standard Toolbars

Operations registered in the iTool containers that create the standard toolbars are automatically sensitized and desensitized to reflect whether the corresponding operation or manipulator is currently available. Some items are sensitized when the selected item is of the correct data or visualization type, others (such as Undo and Redo) are sensitized when some other criteria are met. Still others (such as the File Open operation) are always available.

The following statements create the toolbars used by the standard iTools:

```
wToolbar = WIDGET_BASE(wBase, /ROW, XPAD=0, YPAD=0, SPACE=7)
wTool1 = CW_ITTOOLBAR(wToolbar, oUI, 'Toolbar/File')
wTool2 = CW_ITTOOLBAR(wToolbar, oUI, 'Toolbar/Edit')
wTool3 = CW_ITTOOLBAR(wToolbar, oUI, 'Manipulators', /EXCLUSIVE)
wTool4 = CW_ITTOOLBAR(wToolbar, oUI, 'Manipulators/View', $
/EXCLUSIVE)
wTool5 = CW_ITTOOLBAR(wToolbar, oUI, 'Toolbar/View')
wTool6 = CW_ITTOOLBAR(wToolbar, oUI, 'Manipulators/Annotation', $
/EXCLUSIVE)
```

There are a couple of points to note:

- Some of the standard operations displayed as toolbar buttons are proxies to operations that are registered in other containers. For example, the `Toolbar/File` container contains proxies to four of the operations registered

in the Operations/File container: New, Open, Save, and Print. Proxies are described in [“Registering Components”](#) on page 38.

- The EXCLUSIVE keyword is passed through the CW_ITTOOLBAR function to the underlying widget base via the keyword inheritance mechanism. See the description under [WIDGET_BASE](#) for details.

Modifying Toolbar Contents

Each iTool toolbar contains an entry for each item that is registered in the container. This has two ramifications:

1. If you register (or proxy) a new operation or manipulator in one of the standard toolbar containers, it will appear on the toolbar for your iTool, and be sensitized and desensitized according to the same rules as the other items.
2. If you unregister an operation or manipulator from one of the standard toolbar containers, it will be removed from the toolbar for your iTool.

Operations and manipulators are generally registered and unregistered in the Init method of an iTool creation routine. See [Chapter 7, “Creating an Operation”](#) or [Chapter 8, “Creating a Manipulator”](#) for details. For an example that shows how to unregister standard toolbar items, see [“Example: a Custom iTool Interface”](#) on page 360.

Resizing Toolbars

Toolbars consist of bitmap buttons that cannot be resized, so no special resizing code is required. If you are concerned that all of your toolbars appear even if the user resizes the top level base widget to a width too narrow to display them all, you can either set a minimum width for the top level base or write resizing code that arranges the toolbars into multiple rows if the top level base is not wide enough.

Adding an iTool Window

An iTool drawable area, or *window*, is created using the `CW_ITWINDOW` compound widget. The iTool window can display iTool visualizations and atomic IDL graphics objects, provides a mechanism for the display of the iTools property sheet interface, and makes it easy to perform tasks including translation, rotation, and scaling of visualizations using standard iTool manipulators. The signature of the `CW_ITWINDOW` function is:

```
Result = CW_ITWINDOW(Parent, UI [, KEYWORDS] )
```

where:

- *Parent* is the widget ID of the base widget on which the drawable area will be displayed.
- *UI* is the user interface object associated with the interface.
- *KEYWORDS* are keywords either handled explicitly by the widget or passed through to the widgets that make up the compound widget.

Window Sizing Keywords

Two properties of the iTool window are worth understanding. The `DIMENSIONS` keyword specifies the visible area of the window in pixels as a two-element array [*width*, *height*]. The `VIRTUAL_DIMENSIONS` keyword specifies the total size of the drawing area in pixels as a two-element array [*width*, *height*]. These two keywords replace the `XSIZE/YSIZE` and `SCR_XSIZE/SCR_YSIZE` keywords to the standard IDL draw widget. The `X_SCROLL_SIZE/Y_SCROLL_SIZE` keywords are likewise unnecessary and ignored; the iTool window automatically handles the addition of scrollbars when necessary.

Modifying Window Contents

The contents of an iTool window can be modified interactively by the user in numerous ways:

- using the mouse and one of the available manipulators (translate, rotate, scale, *etc.*).
- by interactively selecting an available operation from an iTool menu or toolbar.
- by interactively changing a property value using the iTool property sheet.

- by interactively importing new data and creating new visualizations using the iTool Data Import Wizard or Insert Visualization dialog.

These methods are standard to all iTools, and are discussed in the *iTool User's Guide*. The contents of the iTool window can also be manipulated programmatically from “outside” the iTool framework in various ways:

- by applying an operation using the iTool object's DoAction method.
- by changing a property value using the iTool object's DoSetProperty method.
- by importing and visualizing new data, either by calling an iTool creation routine with the VIEW_NUMBER keyword set to replace the existing visualization, or by retrieving the iTool data item and using its SetData method.

These programmatic methods for modifying the contents of an existing iTool are discussed in [Appendix A, “Controlling iTools from the IDL Command Line”](#).

Resizing iTool Windows

The CW_ITWINDOW compound widget defines a separate procedure, CW_ITWINDOW_RESIZE, that accepts as arguments the new width and height of the iTool window. This procedure handles all calculations necessary to properly resize the window, taking into account the current zoom factors and the presence or absence of scroll bars. See “[CW_ITWINDOW](#)” on page 416 for complete details.

Adding a Status Bar

iTool status bars are created using the `CW_ITSTATUSBAR` compound widget. Statusbars can be used to display any type of information, but are commonly used to provide user feedback or information about the item underneath the mouse cursor. See “[Status Messages](#)” on page 287 for additional information on status bars. The signature of the `CW_ITSTATUSBAR` function is:

```
Result = CW_ITSTATUSBAR(Parent, UI [, KEYWORDS])
```

where:

- *Parent* is the widget ID of the base widget on which the status bar will be displayed.
- *UI* is the user interface object associated with the interface.
- *KEYWORDS* are keywords either handled explicitly by the widget or passed through to the widgets that make up the compound widget.

Modifying Status Bar Contents

In many cases, the contents of the status bar are updated automatically based on the position of the mouse pointer, selected manipulator, or other condition. You can programmatically update the contents of a status bar using the `StatusMessage` and `ProbeStatusMessage` methods of the `IDLitIMessaging` class as described in “[Status Messages](#)” on page 287.

Resizing Status Bars

The `CW_ITSTATUSBAR` compound widget defines a separate procedure, `CW_ITSTATUSBAR_RESIZE`, that accepts as an argument the new width of the status bar. This procedure handles all calculations necessary to properly resize the status bar, taking into account the number of status bar segments present and any padding used. See “[CW_ITSTATUSBAR](#)” on page 408 for complete details.

Adding a User Interface Panel

iTool user interface panels are created using the `CW_ITPANEL` compound widget. User interface panels can be used to display a selection of widgets in a tab interface on one side of the iTool interface.

Note

If you are creating a custom iTool user interface that includes both regular IDL widgets and iTool compound widgets in a standard base widget, it is unlikely that you will also need to create a user interface panel. (If you want your interface to display other panels that are registered with the iTool system, such as the image, map, or volume panels, you must include a `CW_ITPANEL` widget.) Conversely, you may be able to avoid creating an entire custom user interface if you can place the extra widget controls you need on a user interface panel, which requires significantly less code. See [Chapter 14, “Creating a User Interface Panel”](#) for information on creating a user interface panel that can be displayed with your iTool.

The signature of the `CW_ITPANEL` function is:

```
Result = CW_ITPANEL(Parent, UI [, KEYWORDS])
```

where:

- *Parent* is the ID of the base widget on which the panel will be displayed.
- *UI* is the user interface object associated with the interface.
- *KEYWORDS* are keywords either handled explicitly by the widget or passed through to the widgets that make up the compound widget.

Modifying User Interface Panel Contents

The contents of a user interface panel can be modified based on the current state of the iTool via one or more callback routines, as described in [Chapter 14, “Creating a User Interface Panel”](#).

Resizing User Interface Panels

The `CW_ITPANEL` compound widget defines a separate procedure, `CW_ITPANEL_RESIZE`, that accepts as an argument the new height of the panel. This procedure handles all calculations necessary to properly resize the panel, taking into account the fact that panels can themselves include scrolling base widgets. See “`CW_ITPANEL`” on page 404 for complete details.

Handling Callbacks

User interface callback routines are executed when an iTool component, for which the user interface has created an *observer*, generates a *notification message*. The callback routine then uses the value of the notification message to determine what action to take. Observers are created as described in “[User Interface Registration](#)” on page 342. The iTool messaging system itself is discussed in “[iTool Messaging System](#)” on page 41.

Callback Routine Signature

A user interface widget callback routine has the following signature:

```
PRO WidgetName_callback, Widget, IdOriginator, IdMessage, Value
```

where:

- *WidgetName_callback* is the name of the callback routine.
- *Widget* is the widget ID of the widget registered as an observer.
- *IdOriginator* is a string identifying the source of the message (usually the object identifier of an iTool component object, but it can be any string value).
- *IdMessage* is a string that uniquely identifies the message being sent.
- *Value* is a value that is associated with the message being sent.

See “[iTool Messaging System](#)” on page 41 for more information on the *IdMessage* and *Value* arguments.

Registration of Callback Routines

Callback routines are registered along with the user interface itself, in the call to the `RegisterWidget` method of the `IDLitUI` object. See “[User Interface Registration](#)” on page 342 for details.

Example Callback Routine

The following code segment illustrates a simple callback routine used in both the `idlitwdtool.pro` interface and in the example custom interface developed later in this chapter. This callback handles only one message, `FILENAME`, which is generated when the user saves the current iTool with a new file name. When the callback is executed, the title bar of the iTool interface is updated to reflect the new file name.


```

PRO example2_wdtool_callback, wBase, strID, messageIn, userdata

; Retrieve a pointer to the state structure.
wChild = WIDGET_INFO(wBase, /CHILD)
WIDGET_CONTROL, wChild, GET_UVALUE = pState

; Handle the message that was passed in.
CASE STRUPCASE(messageIn) OF

    'FILENAME': BEGIN
        filename = FILE_BASENAME(userdata)
        newTitle = (*pState).title + ' [' + filename + ']'
        WIDGET_CONTROL, wBase, TLB_SET_TITLE = newTitle
    END

    ELSE: ; Do nothing

ENDCASE

```

Your callback routine may be more complex, handling any number of messages sent to the user interface. In practice, the callback routine for a user interface is often quite simple — the standard user interface used by the iTools in IDL 6.2 handles only three messages.

Note

Your callback routine is also free to quietly ignore any messages. For example, you may choose to do nothing when the FILENAME message is received.

Handling Resize Events

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss resizing of widget interfaces in general; see “[Widget Sizing](#)” in Chapter 30 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for a discussion of widget sizing issues. This section describes some things you will need to know in order to make your custom iTool widget interface resize properly.

Generating Resize Events

If you want users to be able to resize the custom iTool interface you are creating, you must set the `TLB_SIZE_EVENTS` keyword when creating the top-level widget base that holds your interface. With this keyword set, when the user resizes the top-level base, a `WIDGET_BASE` event is generated, reporting the new width and height of the base widget.

Handling the Resize Event

The technique used by the standard iTool widget interface to handle resize events for the top-level base involves storing the current size of the base widget in the widget’s state structure. The state structure is available to widget event handling and callback routines in the user value of the first child widget of the top-level base.

The following code, from the event handling routine in the `example2_wdtool.pro` interface definition (developed in “[Example: a Custom iTool Interface](#)” on page 360), uses the value stored in the `basesize` field of the state structure, along with the new size of the base widget, to calculate the change in the size of the base. The changes in the size are then passed as arguments to the `EXAMPLE2_WDTOOL_RESIZE` routine, which handles the actual resizing of the interface elements.

```

; The top-level base was resized
'WIDGET_BASE': BEGIN
    ; Compute the size change of the base relative to
    ; its cached former size.
    WIDGET_CONTROL, event.top, TLB_GET_SIZE = newSize
    deltaW = newSize[0] - (*pState).basesize[0]
    deltaH = newSize[1] - (*pState).basesize[1]
    example2_wdtool_resize, pState, deltaW, deltaH
END

```

Writing a Resize Routine

Writing a resizing routine for your custom iTool user interface may be the most complicated part of the task. Each interface is different, and resize events must be

handled based on the layout and desired behavior of the interface. Aside from the techniques discussed in “[Widget Sizing](#)” in Chapter 30 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual, keep the following in mind when writing your resizing routine:

- Use the supplied *_RESIZE procedures defined by the iTool compound widget routines to resize the compound widgets, when they are available. See the reference pages for the CW_IT* widgets for details.
- Widget sizing is handled differently on Windows and UNIX platforms. Specifically:
 - On Windows platforms, turn off widget updating (via the UPDATE keyword to WIDGET_BASE) while widgets are resizing. This helps prevent flashing.
 - On UNIX platforms, make sure updating is turned on while resizing, to ensure proper resizing.
- If you are storing the size of your base widget in the interface’s state structure, be sure to update the values in the state structure after the interface has been resized.

Handling Shutdown Events

Because your custom interface is associated with an iTool, destruction of the interface may entail shutting down and cleaning up the entire iTools system. This means that in addition to normal cleanup of pointers and objects used by the interface, you will need to instruct the iTools system to shut itself down when your interface is destroyed.

Generating Shutdown Events

You must set the `TLB_KILL_REQUEST_EVENTS` keyword when creating the top-level widget base that holds your interface. With this keyword set, when the user destroys the top-level base, a `WIDGET_KILL_REQUEST` event is generated, allowing you to perform the actions necessary to shut down the iTools system.

Handling the Shutdown Event

When the user destroys the top-level base of your custom interface, you may want to prompt the user to save the current iTool state before shutting down. The standard iTool interface uses an iTool system service named “Shutdown” to both prompt the user for confirmation that a shutdown is requested and offer to let the user save the current state. The Shutdown service then handles other cleanup tasks before exiting the iTool.

The following code, from the event handling routine in the `example2_wdtool.pro` interface definition (developed in [“Example: a Custom iTool Interface”](#) on page 360), calls the iTools Shutdown service.

```

; Destroy the widget.
'WIDGET_KILL_REQUEST': BEGIN
    ; Get the shutdown service and call DoAction.
    ; This code must be here, and not in the _cleanup routine,
    ; because the tool may not actually be killed. (For example
    ; the user may be asked if they want to save, and they may
    ; hit "Cancel" instead.)
    IF OBJ_VALID((*pState).oUI) THEN BEGIN
        oTool = (*pState).oUI->GetTool()
        oShutdown = oTool->GetService('SHUTDOWN')
        void = (*pState).oUI->DoAction(oShutdown-
>getFullIdentifier())
    ENDIF
END

```

Your code should not assume that the top-level base widget will actually be destroyed, because the user may decide to cancel the close operation. Since the process of actually destroying the widget hierarchy is divorced from the generation of the `WIDGET_KILL_REQUEST` event, you may also need to supply a cleanup routine that is invoked only when the widget hierarchy is actually destroyed.

Writing a Cleanup Routine

A cleanup routine is necessary if your widget interface uses heap variables (pointers or objects) to store information about itself — the heap variables will need to be cleaned up separately when the interface itself is destroyed. The following code, from the cleanup routine in the `example2_wdtool.pro` interface definition (developed in “[Example: a Custom iTool Interface](#)” on page 360), frees the pointer used to store the widget interface’s state structure.

```
PRO example2_wdtool_cleanup, wChild

    ; Make sure we have a valid widget ID.
    IF (~WIDGET_INFO(wChild, /VALID)) THEN $
        RETURN

    ; Retrieve the pointer to the state structure, and
    ; free it.
    WIDGET_CONTROL, wChild, GET_UVALUE = pState
    IF (PTR_VALID(pState)) THEN $
        PTR_FREE, pState

END
```

Calling the Cleanup Routine

The final step is to specify when the cleanup routine should be called. Since the user can cancel out of the shutdown operation, the cleanup routine should only be called when the widget hierarchy is actually destroyed, not when the `WIDGET_KILL_REQUEST` event is handled. We accomplish this by specifying the cleanup routine as the value of the `KILL_NOTIFY` keyword to the `WIDGET_BASE` function.

In the standard iTool widget interface and in our example code, we set the `KILL_NOTIFY` keyword on the first child widget of the top-level base widget. The following statement, near the end of the interface definition routine, specifies the name of the cleanup routine in the `example2_wdtool.pro` interface definition (developed in “[Example: a Custom iTool Interface](#)” on page 360):

```
WIDGET_CONTROL, wChild, KILL_NOTIFY = "example2_wdtool_cleanup"
```

Creating an iTool Launch Routine

Once you have created your custom iTool widget interface, you must create a way to launch an iTool using the interface. To do this, you will most often create a custom iTool launch routine.

iTool launch routines are discussed in detail in [“Creating an iTool Launch Routine”](#) on page 103. This section describes changes you will need to make to an existing launch routine to cause an iTool to use your custom widget interface.

Register Your User Interface

To register your new user interface, call the ITREGISTER routine with the USER_INTERFACE keyword. The following statement registers the example interface developed in [“Example: a Custom iTool Interface”](#) on page 360:

```
ITREGISTER, 'Example2_UI', 'example2_wdtool', /USER_INTERFACE
```

Here, the example interface is registered with the name “Example2_UI”.

Use Your User Interface

The final step is to create an instance of an iTool using your interface. To do this, specify the USER_INTERFACE keyword to the IDLITSYS_CREATETOOL function. The following statement creates an instance of an example tool using the example interface:

```
identifier = IDLITSYS_CREATETOOL('Example 2 Tool', $
    VISUALIZATION_TYPE = ['Plot'], $
    USER_INTERFACE='Example2_UI', $
    TITLE = 'Example iTool Interface', $
    _EXTRA = _extra)
```

See the iTool launch routine developed in [“Example: a Custom iTool Interface”](#) on page 360 for a working example.

Using an Existing iTool Launch Routine

If you first register your iTool interface with the iTool system using the ITREGISTER procedure, you can specify that your interface be used by an existing iTool launch routine that accepts the USER_INTERFACE keyword. This allows you to avoid the need to create a custom launch routine if an existing routine will serve.

For example, if we wanted to use our custom interface with the IPLOT tool, we could execute the following lines at the IDL command prompt:

```
ITREGISTER, 'Example2_UI', 'example2_wdtool', /USER_INTERFACE  
IPLOT, USER_INTERFACE='Example2_UI'
```

These lines will create an iPlot tool using our custom user interface.

This approach may be worthwhile when an existing launch routine handles data specified on the command line in a way that suits your needs. For example, while our example tool accepts no parameters at the IDL command prompt, specifying our custom interface as the interface for the iPlot tool allows us to specify data:

```
IPLOT, EXP(INDGEN(10)), USER_INTERFACE='Example2_UI'
```

Example: a Custom iTool Interface

This example creates a custom iTool interface that incorporates several standard IDL widgets to the left of the drawable area and displays a subset of the menus and toolbars that appear in a standard iTool. A button widget inserts a plot line created from random data, and several controls allow the user to change the number of points used to create the line, the line thickness, and the line color. Finally, a button launches an iTool operation that affects the selected plot data. The finished interface looks like this:

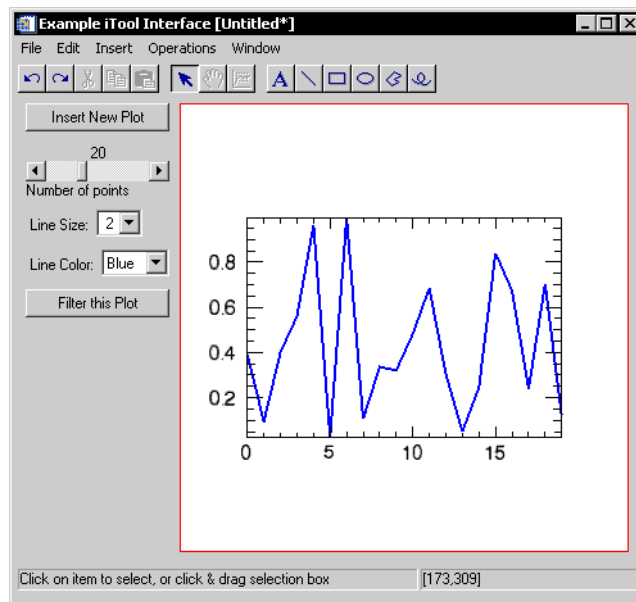


Figure 15-1: Example Custom iTool Interface

The example is purposefully simple. All of the actions accomplished by the custom interface can be accomplished using the standard iTool interface. It does, however, illustrate the concepts necessary to create a custom iTool interface.

This example consists of three files, described in the following sections:

- [Widget Interface Creation Routine](#) (Page 361)
- [iTool Class Definition Routine Discussion](#) (Page 375)
- [iTool Launch Routine Discussion](#) (Page 376)

Note

The code for this example is provided in the IDL distribution, in the `examples/doc/itools` subdirectory of the main IDL directory. You can run the example code directly by entering `example2tool` at the IDL prompt.

Widget Interface Creation Routine

This section describes the widget interface creation routine for the example interface.

Example Code

The example consists of several routines and is quite long. As a result, this discussion deals with individual chunks and may skip briefly over sections that have more to do with widget programming and are not explicitly related to the creation of an iTool interface. To see the routine in its entirety, inspect the file `example2_wdtool.pro` in the `examples/doc/itools` subdirectory of the IDL distribution.

Individual routines in the interface definition are discussed here in the order they appear in the source file. The routines are:

- [example2_wdtool_callback](#) (page 362)
- [example2_wdtool_resize](#) (page 363)
- [example2_wdtool_cleanup](#) (page 365)
- [example2_wdtool_event](#) (page 365)
- [draw_plot_event](#) (page 367)
- [linesize_event](#) (page 368)
- [color_event](#) (page 369)
- [filter_event](#) (page 370)
- [example2_wdtool](#) (page 371)

In our interface definition, we store the *state structure* for the entire widget interface in a pointer (named `pState`) that is itself stored in the user value of the first child widget of the top-level base widget. This is a standard technique that allows us to pass information about the interface between the interface routines. (Handling of widget state information is discussed in detail in “[Managing Application State](#)” and “[Creating a Compound Widget](#)” in Chapter 28 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual.) If you are not familiar with this concept, inspect the `example2_wdtool` routine before reading the event handling and callback routines.

Note

We store our state variable in the user value of the first child widget, rather than the user value of the top-level base, as a matter of programming style. You could also choose to store the variable in the user value of the top-level base.

example2_wdtool_callback

Our example interface handles only one message from the iTool system: FILENAME. The complete code for the callback routine is shown below.

```

PRO example2_wdtool_callback, wBase, strID, messageIn, userdata

; Make sure we have a valid widget.
IF (~WIDGET_INFO(wBase, /VALID)) THEN $
    RETURN

; Retrieve a pointer to the state structure.
wChild = WIDGET_INFO(wBase, /CHILD)
WIDGET_CONTROL, wChild, GET_UVALUE = pState

; Handle the message that was passed in.
CASE STRUPCASE(messageIn) OF

    ; The FILENAME message is received if the user saves
    ; the iTool with a new name. This callback sets the
    ; title of the iTool to match the name of the file.
    'FILENAME': BEGIN
        ; Use the new filename to construct the title.
        ; Remove the path.
        filename = FILE_BASENAME(userdata)
        ; Append the filename onto the base title.
        newTitle = (*pState).title + ' [' + filename + ']'
        WIDGET_CONTROL, wBase, TLB_SET_TITLE = newTitle
    END

    ; Other messages would be handled here.

ELSE: ; Do nothing

ENDCASE

END

```

Discussion

The FILENAME message and the rest of the callback routine are discussed in [“Example Callback Routine”](#) on page 352.

example2_wdtool_resize

The widget resizing routine for our example interface is shown below. It accepts three arguments: a pointer to the widget interface state structure, an integer representing the change in width (in pixels), and an integer representing the change in height (also in pixels).

Note

Widget resizing code depends almost entirely on the structure and layout of the widget interface you are creating. While this example may give you ideas about how to resize your interface, you will need to change it — probably substantially — to suit the needs of your interface.

```

PRO example2_wdtool_resize, pState, deltaW, deltaH

; Retrieve the original geometry (prior to the resize)
; of the iTool draw and toolbar widgets.
drawgeom = WIDGET_INFO((*pState).wDraw, /GEOMETRY)
toolbarGeom = WIDGET_INFO((*pState).wToolbar, /GEOMETRY)

; Compute the updated dimensions of the visible portion
; of the draw widget.
newVisW = (drawgeom.xsize + deltaW)
newVisH = (drawgeom.ysize + deltaH)

; Check whether UPDATE is turned on, and save the value.
isUpdate = WIDGET_INFO((*pState).wBase, /UPDATE)

; Under Unix, UPDATE must be turned on or windows will
; not resize properly. Turn UPDATE off under Windows
; to prevent window flashing.
IF (!VERSION.OS_FAMILY EQ 'Windows') THEN BEGIN
    IF (isUpdate) THEN $
        WIDGET_CONTROL, (*pState).wBase, UPDATE = 0
ENDIF ELSE BEGIN
    ; On Unix make sure update is on.
    IF (~isUpdate) THEN $
        WIDGET_CONTROL, (*pState).wBase, /UPDATE
ENDELSE

; Update the draw widget dimensions.
IF (newVisW NE drawgeom.xsize || newVisH ne drawgeom.ysize) $
    THEN BEGIN
        CW_ITWINDOW_RESIZE, (*pState).wDraw, newVisW, newVisH
    ENDIF

; Update the width of the toolbar base.

```

```

WIDGET_CONTROL, (*pState).wToolbar, $
    SCR_XSIZE = toolbarGeom.scr_xsize+deltaW

; Update the status bar to be the same width as the toolbar.
CW_ITSTATUSBAR_RESIZE, (*pState).wStatus, $
    toolbarGeom.scr_xsize+deltaW

; Turn UPDATE back on if we turned it off.
IF (isUpdate && ~WIDGET_INFO((*pState).wBase, /UPDATE)) THEN $
    WIDGET_CONTROL, (*pState).wBase, /UPDATE

; Retrieve and store the new top-level base size.
IF (WIDGET_INFO((*pState).wBase, /REALIZED)) THEN BEGIN
    WIDGET_CONTROL, (*pState).wBase, TLB_GET_SIZE = basesize
    (*pState).basesize = basesize
ENDIF

END

```

Discussion

Our code resizes only three widgets when the size of the top-level base changes: the iTool window, the toolbar, and the status bar. The toolbar and status bar are resized to fit the new width of the top-level base, and the iTool window is made larger or smaller by the same amount as the top-level base. This preserves the overall arrangement of the interface elements, and does not change the width of the left-hand base, which holds the “custom” interface elements.

Note the handling of the UPDATE keyword. This is necessary because UNIX and Microsoft Windows behave differently as the top-level base is being resized.

Note also that we use the CW_ITWINDOW_RESIZE and CW_ITSTATUSBAR_RESIZE procedures to resize the iTool window and status bar widgets. These routines handle the details of internal resizing of the compound widgets, and perform other necessary adjustments. The width of the toolbar is resized in a more traditional way, by setting the SCR_XSIZE on the base widget that holds the individual toolbars.

Finally, we store the new size of the top-level base in the basesize field of the widget interface’s state structure. Storing this value in the state structure allows us to calculate the change in size of the top-level base in when the WIDGET_BASE event arrives in our event-handler routine.

example2_wdtool_cleanup

The cleanup routine for our interface is simple; it frees the pointer used to hold the widget interface's state structure. The complete code for the cleanup routine is shown below.

```
PRO example2_wdtool_cleanup, wChild

    ; Make sure we have a valid widget ID.
    IF (~WIDGET_INFO(wChild, /VALID)) THEN $
        RETURN

    ; Retrieve the pointer to the state structure, and
    ; free it.
    WIDGET_CONTROL, wChild, GET_UVALUE = pState
    IF (PTR_VALID(pState)) THEN $
        PTR_FREE, pState

END
```

Discussion

Note that this routine is only called when the widget interface is actually destroyed, not when the `WIDGET_KILL_REQUEST` event is processed. See [“Handling Shutdown Events”](#) on page 356 for details.

example2_wdtool_event

The main event-handling routine for our widget interface handles three types of events that might be generated by the top-level base widget:

- `WIDGET_KILL_REQUEST` (generated when the user requests that the application be exited).
- `WIDGET_KBRD_FOCUS` (generated when the user selects the application).
- `WIDGET_BASE` (generated when the user resizes the top-level base widget).

A more complicated interface may handle additional events; the techniques used would be similar to those illustrated here. The complete code for the main event-handler routine is shown below.

```
PRO example2_wdtool_event, event

    ; Retrieve a pointer to the state structure.
    wChild = WIDGET_INFO(event.handler, /CHILD)
    WIDGET_CONTROL, wChild, GET_UVALUE = pState

    CASE TAG_NAMES(event, /STRUCTURE_NAME) OF
```

```

; Destroy the widget.
'WIDGET_KILL_REQUEST': BEGIN
    ; Get the shutdown service and call DoAction.
    ; This code must be here, and not in the _cleanup routine,
    ; because the tool may not actually be killed. (For example
    ; the user may be asked if they want to save, and they may
    ; hit "Cancel" instead.)
    IF OBJ_VALID((*pState).oUI) THEN BEGIN
        oTool = (*pState).oUI->GetTool()
        oShutdown = oTool->GetService('SHUTDOWN')
        void=(*pState).oUI->DoAction(oShutdown->getFullIdentifier())
    ENDIF
END

; Focus change.
'WIDGET_KBRD_FOCUS': BEGIN
    ; If the iTool is gaining the focus, Get the set current tool
    ; service and call DoAction.
    IF (event.enter && OBJ_VALID((*pState).oUI)) THEN BEGIN
        oTool = (*pState).oUI->GetTool()
        oSetCurrent = oTool->GetService('SET_AS_CURRENT_TOOL')
        void = oTool->DoAction(oSetCurrent->getFullIdentifier())
    ENDIF
END

; The top-level base was resized.
'WIDGET_BASE': BEGIN
    ; Compute the size change of the base relative to
    ; its cached former size.
    WIDGET_CONTROL, event.top, TLB_GET_SIZE = newSize
    deltaW = newSize[0] - (*pState).basesize[0]
    deltaH = newSize[1] - (*pState).basesize[1]
    example2_wdtool_resize, pState, deltaW, deltaH
END

ELSE: ; Do nothing

ENDCASE

END

```

Discussion

Two of the three events handled in this routine are discussed in earlier sections of this chapter. See [“Handling Resize Events”](#) on page 354 for details on the WIDGET_BASE event and [“Handling Shutdown Events”](#) on page 356 for details on the WIDGET_KILL_REQUEST event.

The `WIDGET_KBRD_FOCUS` event arrives when the user clicks “into” or “out of” the widget interface. We are concerned only with events generated when the user selects the widget interface, because in this case we need to inform the iTool system object that our iTool has become the “current” tool. To do this, we check the value of the `enter` field of the widget event structure; if it contains a 1 (one), we know that the user has clicked “into” the interface.

Next, we check to make sure that the user interface object stored in the `OUI` field of the widget interface state structure is still valid. If the object is valid, we retrieve a reference to the iTool object using the user interface object’s `GetTool` method. We use the iTool object reference to retrieve an object reference to the `SET_AS_CURRENT_TOOL` service, and call the iTool object’s `DoAction` method with the full identifier of the service.

draw_plot_event

The `draw_plot_event` routine is specified as the event handler for the “Insert New Plot” button in the custom section of the interface. The routine checks the values of the other widgets in the custom interface and uses the `IPlot` routine to generate a new plot line in our iTool window. The complete code for this event-handler routine is shown below.

```
PRO draw_plot_event, event

; Retrieve a pointer to the state structure.
wChild = WIDGET_INFO(event.top, /CHILD)
WIDGET_CONTROL, wChild, GET_UVALUE = pState

; Get the iTool identifier and make sure our iTool
; is the current tool.
toolID = (*pState).oTool->GetFullIdentifier()
ITCURRENT, toolID

; Define some line colors.
colors = [[0,0,0],[255,0,0], [0,255,0], [0,0,255]]

; Get the value of the line color droplist and use it
; to select the line color.
linecolor = WIDGET_INFO((*pState).wLineColor, /DROPLIST_SELECT)
newcolor = colors[* ,linecolor]

; Get the value of the "number of points" slider.
WIDGET_CONTROL, (*pState).wSlider, GET_VALUE=points

; Get the value of the line size droplist.
linesize = WIDGET_INFO((*pState).wLineSize, /DROPLIST_SELECT)+1
```

```

; Call IPLOT to create a plot of random values, replacing the
; data used in the iTool's window.
IPLOT, RANDOMU(seed, points), THICK=linesize, $
      COLOR=newcolor, VIEW_NUMBER=1

```

```
END
```

Discussion

This routine uses mostly standard widget programming techniques. Two points are worth noting, however:

1. We must be sure that our iTool is set as the current tool. To do this, we retrieve our iTool's identifier using the object reference stored in the widget interface's state structure and the `GetFullIdentifier` method. Next, we use the `ITCURRENT` routine with the full identifier to make sure our tool is current.
2. When we call the `IPLOT` routine to generate the new plot, we set the `VIEW_NUMBER` keyword equal to 1 (one). This *replaces* the data in the first (and in our case, only) view in the tool with the data specified.

linesize_event

The `linesize_event` routine is specified as the event handler for the Line Size droplist in the custom section of the interface. The complete code for this event-handler routine is shown below.

```

PRO linesize_event, event

; Retrieve a pointer to the state structure.
wChild = WIDGET_INFO(event.top, /CHILD)
WIDGET_CONTROL, wChild, GET_UVALUE = pState

; Get the iTool identifier and make sure our iTool
; is the current tool.
toolID = (*pState).oTool->GetFullIdentifier()
ITCURRENT, toolID

; Get the value of the line size droplist.
linesize = WIDGET_INFO((*pState).wLineStyle, /DROPLIST_SELECT)+1

; Select the first plot line visualization in the window.
; There should be only one line, but we select the first one
; just to be sure.
plotID = (*pState).oTool->FindIdentifiers('*plot*', $
      /VISUALIZATIONS)
plotObj = (*pState).oTool->GetByIdentifier(plotID[0])
plotObj->Select

```



```

; Set the THICK property on the plot line and commit the change.
void = (*pState).oTool->DoSetProperty(plotID, 'THICK', $
    linesize)
(*pState).oTool->CommitActions

```

END

Discussion

This routine uses the same technique as the `draw_plot_event` routine to ensure that our iTool is the current tool. It then retrieves the identifier of the plot line, ensures that the line itself is selected, and sets the `THICK` property on the line. For additional information on retrieving component identifiers and changing property values, see [Appendix A, “Controlling iTools from the IDL Command Line”](#).

color_event

The `color_event` routine is specified as the event handler for the Line Color droplist in the custom section of the interface. The complete code for this event-handler routine is shown below.

```

PRO color_event, event

; Retrieve a pointer to the state structure.
wChild = WIDGET_INFO(event.top, /CHILD)
WIDGET_CONTROL, wChild, GET_UVALUE = pState

; Get the iTool identifier and make sure our iTool
; is the current tool.
toolID = (*pState).oTool->GetFullIdentifier()
ITCURRENT, toolID

; Define some line colors.
colors = [[0,0,0],[255,0,0], [0,255,0], [0,0,255]]

; Get the value of the line color droplist and use it
; to select the line color.
linecolor = WIDGET_INFO((*pState).wLineColor, /DROPLIST_SELECT)
newcolor = colors[* ,linecolor]

; Select the first plot line visualization in the window.
; There should be only one line, but we select the first one
; just to be sure.
plotID = (*pState).oTool->FindIdentifiers('plot*', $
    /VISUALIZATIONS)
plotObj = (*pState).oTool->GetByIdentifier(plotID[0])
plotObj->Select

```

```

; Set the COLOR property on the plot line and commit the change.
void = (*pState).oTool->DoSetProperty(plotID, 'COLOR', $
    newcolor)
(*pState).oTool->CommitActions

```

END

Discussion

This routine uses the same technique as the `draw_plot_event` routine to ensure that our iTool is the current tool. It then retrieves the identifier of the plot line, ensures that the line itself is selected, and sets the `COLOR` property on the line. For additional information on retrieving component identifiers and changing property values, see [Appendix A, “Controlling iTools from the IDL Command Line”](#).

filter_event

The `filter_event` routine is specified as the event handler for the “Filter this Plot” button in the custom section of the interface. The complete code for this event-handler routine is shown below.

```

PRO filter_event, event

; Retrieve a pointer to the state structure.
wChild = WIDGET_INFO(event.top, /CHILD)
WIDGET_CONTROL, wChild, GET_UVALUE = pState

; Get the iTool identifier and make sure our iTool
; is the current tool.
toolID = (*pState).oTool->GetFullIdentifier()
ITCURRENT, toolID

; Select the first plot line visualization in the window.
; There should be only one line, but we select the first one
; just to be sure. Also retrieve the identifier for the Median
; filter operation.
plotID = (*pState).oTool->FindIdentifiers('*plot*', $
    /VISUALIZATIONS)
medianID = (*pState).oTool->FindIdentifiers('*median', $
    /OPERATIONS)
plotObj = (*pState).oTool->GetByIdentifier(plotID[0])
plotObj->Select

; Apply the Median filter operation to the selected plot line
; and commit the change.
void = (*pState).oTool->DoAction(medianID)
(*pState).oTool->CommitActions

```

END

Discussion

This routine uses the same technique as the `draw_plot_event` routine to ensure that our iTool is the current tool. It then retrieves the identifier of the plot line and the Median operation, selects the line, calls the `DoAction` method to apply the Median filter to the selected plot line. For additional information on retrieving component identifiers and executing operations, see [Appendix A, “Controlling iTools from the IDL Command Line”](#).

example2_wdtool

The `example2_wdtool` routine builds the widget hierarchy for our custom iTool interface and registers it with the iTool system. Much of this routine consists of standard IDL widget programming, and many of the sections have been discussed in [“Creating the Interface Routine”](#) on page 340. The complete code for the widget creation routine is shown below.

```

PRO example2_wdtool, oTool, TITLE = titleIn, $
    LOCATION = location, $
    VIRTUAL_DIMENSIONS = virtualDimensions, $
    USER_INTERFACE = oUI, $ ; output keyword
    _REF_EXTRA = _extra

; Make sure the iTool object reference we've been passed
; is valid.
IF (~OBJ_VALID(oTool)) THEN $
    MESSAGE, 'Tool is not a valid object.'

; Set the window title.
title = (N_ELEMENTS(titleIn) GT 0) ? titleIn[0] : 'IDL iTool'

; Display the hourglass cursor while the iTool is loading.
WIDGET_CONTROL, /HOURLASS

; Create a base widget to hold everything.
wBase = WIDGET_BASE(/COLUMN, MBAR = wMenuBar, $
    TITLE = title, $
    /TLB_KILL_REQUEST_EVENTS, $
    /TLB_SIZE_EVENTS, $
    /KBRD_FOCUS_EVENTS, $
    _EXTRA = _extra)

; Create a new user interface object, using our iTool.
oUI = OBJ_NEW('IDLitUI', oTool, GROUP_LEADER = wBase)

; Menubars:

```

```

; iTool menubars are created using the CW_ITMENU compound
; widget. The following statements create the standard iTool
; menus, pointing at the standard iTool operations containers.
; Note that if the iTool to which this user interface is applied
; has registered new operations in these containers, those
; operations will show up automatically. Similarly, if the
; iTool has unregistered any operations in these containers,
; the operations will not appear. Our example tool unregisters
; several of the standard iTool menu items -- see the
; 'example2tool__define.pro' file for examples. Note that we
; don't want the standard Help menu in our example interface,
; so we don't include it here.
wFile      = CW_ITMENU(wMenubar, oUI, 'Operations/File')
wEdit      = CW_ITMENU(wMenubar, oUI, 'Operations/Edit')
wInsert    = CW_ITMENU(wMenubar, oUI, 'Operations/Insert')
wOperations = CW_ITMENU(wMenubar, oUI, 'Operations/Operations')
wWindow    = CW_ITMENU(wMenubar, oUI, 'Operations/Window')

; You can create additional (non-iTool) menus in the
; traditional way. The following lines would create an
; additional menu with two menu items. Note that you
; must explicitly handle events from non-iTool menus
; in your event handler.
;
; newMenu = WIDGET_BUTTON(wMenubar, VALUE='New Menu')
; newMenu1 = WIDGET_BUTTON(newMenu, VALUE='one')
; newMenu2 = WIDGET_BUTTON(newMenu, VALUE='two')

; Toolbars:
; iTool toolbars are created using the CW_ITTOOLBAR compound
; widget. The following statements create the standard iTool
; toolbars. Note that if the iTool to which this user interface
; is applied has registered new operations or manipulators in
; the referenced containers, those operations or manipulators
; will show up automatically. Similarly, if the iTool has
; unregistered any items in these containers, the items will
; not appear. Our example tool uses the standard operations
; and manipulators, but only displays three of the six standard
; toolbars.
wToolbar = WIDGET_BASE(wBase, /ROW, XPAD = 0, YPAD = 0, $
    SPACE = 7)
wTool2 = CW_ITTOOLBAR(wToolbar, oUI, 'Toolbar/Edit')
wTool3 = CW_ITTOOLBAR(wToolbar, oUI, 'Manipulators', $
    /EXCLUSIVE)
wTool6=CW_ITTOOLBAR(wToolbar, oUI, 'Manipulators/Annotation', $
    /EXCLUSIVE)

; Widget Layout
; This section lays out the main portion of the widget

```

```

; interface. We create the widget layout in the usual way,
; incorporating iTool compound widgets and "traditional"
; widgets in the desired locations.

; Create a base to hold the controls and iTool draw window.
wBaseUI = WIDGET_BASE(wBase, /ROW)

; Put controls in the left-hand base.
wBaseLeft = WIDGET_BASE(wBaseUI, /COLUMN)
wButton1 = WIDGET_BUTTON(wBaseLeft, $
    VALUE='Insert New Plot', $
    EVENT_PRO='draw_plot_event')
padBase = WIDGET_BASE(wBaseLeft, YSIZE=5)
wSlider = WIDGET_SLIDER(wBaseLeft, VALUE='10', $
    TITLE='Number of points', MINIMUM=5, MAXIMUM=50)
padBase = WIDGET_BASE(wBaseLeft, YSIZE=5)
wLineStyle = WIDGET_DROPLIST(wBaseLeft, $
    VALUE=[' 1 ', ' 2 ', ' 3 ', ' 4 '], $
    TITLE='Line Size: ', EVENT_PRO='linesize_event')
padBase = WIDGET_BASE(wBaseLeft, YSIZE=5)
wLineColor = WIDGET_DROPLIST(wBaseLeft, $
    VALUE=['Black', 'Red', 'Green', 'Blue'], $
    TITLE='Line Color: ', EVENT_PRO='color_event')
padBase = WIDGET_BASE(wBaseLeft, YSIZE=5)
wButton2 = WIDGET_BUTTON(wBaseLeft, $
    VALUE='Filter this Plot', $
    EVENT_PRO='filter_event')

; Put the iTool draw window on the right.
wBaseRight = WIDGET_BASE(wBaseUI, /COLUMN, /BASE_ALIGN_RIGHT)

; Set the initial dimensions of the draw window, in pixels.
dimensions = [350, 350]

; Create the iTool drawable area.
wDraw = CW_ITWINDOW(wBaseRight, oUI, $
    DIMENSIONS = dimensions, $
    VIRTUAL_DIMENSIONS = virtualDimensions)

; Get the geometry of the top-level base widget.
baseGeom = WIDGET_INFO(wBase, /GEOMETRY)

; Create the status bar.
wStatus = CW_ITSTATUSBAR(wBase, oUI, $
    XSIZE = baseGeom.xsize-baseGeom.xpad)

; If the user did not specify a location, position the
; iTool on the screen.
IF (N_ELEMENTS(location) EQ 0) THEN BEGIN

```

```

        location = [(screen[0] - baseGeom.xsize)/2 - 10, $
                    ((screen[1] - baseGeom.yysize)/2 - 100) > 10]
ENDIF

WIDGET_CONTROL, wBase, MAP = 0, $
    TLB_SET_XOFFSET = location[0], $
    TLB_SET_YOFFSET = location[1]

; Get the widget ID of the first child widget of our
; base widget. We'll use the child widget's user value
; to store our widget state structure.
wChild = WIDGET_INFO(wBase, /CHILD)

; Create a state structure for the widget and stash
; a pointer to the structure in the user value of the
; first child widget.
state = { $
    oTool      : oTool,      $
    oUI        : oUI,        $
    wBase      : wBase,      $
    title      : title,      $
    basesize   : [0L, 0L],   $
    wToolbar   : wToolbar,   $
    wDraw      : wDraw,      $
    wStatus    : wStatus,    $
    wSlider    : wSlider,    $
    wLineSize  : wLineSize,  $
    wLineColor : wLineColor }

pState = PTR_NEW(state, /NO_COPY)
WIDGET_CONTROL, wChild, SET_UVALUE = pState

; Realize our interface. Note that we have left the
; interface unmapped, to avoid flashing.
WIDGET_CONTROL, wBase, /REALIZE

; Retrieve the starting dimensions and store them.
; Used for window resizing in event processing.
WIDGET_CONTROL, wBase, TLB_GET_SIZE = basesize
(*pState).basesize = basesize

; Register the top-level base widget with the UI object.
; Returns a string containing the identifier of the
; interface widget.
myID = oUI->RegisterWidget(wBase, 'Example 2 Tool', $
    'example2_wdtool_callback')

; Register to receive messages from the iTool components
; included in the interface.

```

```

oUI->AddOnNotifyObserver, myID, oTool->GetFullIdentifier()

; Specify how to handle destruction of the widget interface.
WIDGET_CONTROL, wChild, KILL_NOTIFY = "example2_wdtool_cleanup"

; Display the iTool widget interface.
WIDGET_CONTROL, wBase, /MAP

; Start event processing.
XMANAGER, 'example2_wdtool', wBase, /NO_BLOCK

END

```

Discussion

Most of the important sections of this routine have been discussed in previous sections. There are, however, a few additional points worth noting:

- We use the user value of the first child of the top-level base (`wChild`) to store a pointer to the widget interface's state structure. This allows us to easily retrieve the state structure in event-handler routines without the need to use the user value of the top-level base.
- The state structure contains the widget IDs of all of the widgets we need access to in our event-handler routines, as well as object references to the iTool and user interface object, the current dimensions of the base widget, and the title. You may find it useful to cache other information in the state structure as well.
- Some actions, such as retrieving the actual size of the top-level base widget, can only be performed after the widget hierarchy has been realized. To prevent flashing after realization but before we are ready to begin event processing, we set the MAP keyword equal to 0 (zero) before realizing the widgets and back to 1 (one) just before our call to XMANAGER begins processing events.

iTool Class Definition Routine Discussion

The class definition routine creates a new iTool class based on the IDLitToolbase class. The Init method simply unregisters operations and manipulators we do not want to appear in the menus and toolbars of our new interface.

Example Code

This iTool class is defined in the file `example2tool__define.pro` in the `examples/doc/itools` subdirectory of the IDL distribution.

```

FUNCTION example2tool::Init, _REF_EXTRA = _extra

; Call our super class.

```

```

IF ( self->IDLitToolbase::Init(_EXTRA = _extra) EQ 0) THEN $
    RETURN, 0

; This tool removes several of the standard iTool operations
; and manipulators.

;*** Insert menu
self->UnRegister, 'OPERATIONS/INSERT/VISUALIZATION'
self->UnRegister, 'OPERATIONS/INSERT/VIEW'
self->UnRegister, 'OPERATIONS/INSERT/DATA SPACE'
self->UnRegister, 'OPERATIONS/INSERT/COLORBAR'

;*** Window menu
self->Unregister, 'OPERATIONS/WINDOW/FITTOVIEW'
self->Unregister, 'OPERATIONS/WINDOW/DATA MANAGER'

;*** Operations menu
self->UnRegister, 'OPERATIONS/OPERATIONS/MAP PROJECTION'

;*** Toolbars
self->UnRegister, 'MANIPULATORS/ROTATE'

RETURN, 1

END

PRO example2tool__Define

struct = { example2tool,          $
           INHERITS IDLitToolbase $ ; Provides iTool interface
         }

END

```

To find the identifiers of operations and manipulators you wish to unregister, create an instance of the tool with the items still registered, and use the `FindIdentifiers` method of the `IDLitTool` class to retrieve the full identifiers of the items you are interested in. See [“Retrieving Component Identifiers”](#) on page 382 for details.

iTool Launch Routine Discussion

Our iTool launch routine simply registers the `example2tool` iTool class and the `example2_wdtool` interface definition, then creates an instance of the `Example 2 Tool` iTool using the `Example2_UI` interface.

Example Code

This iTool launch is defined in the file `example2tool.pro` in the `examples/doc/itools` subdirectory of the IDL distribution.

```
PRO example2tool, IDENTIFIER = identifier, _EXTRA = _extra

ITREGISTER, 'Example 2 Tool', 'example2tool'
ITREGISTER, 'Example2_UI', 'example2_wdtool', /USER_INTERFACE

identifier = IDLITSYS_CREATETOOL('Example 2 Tool', $
    VISUALIZATION_TYPE = ['Plot'], $
    USER_INTERFACE='Example2_UI', $
    TITLE = 'Example iTool Interface', $
    _EXTRA = _extra)

END
```

Note that our launch routine does not allow the iTool to accept command-line arguments. A more sophisticated iTool might allow the user to supply data at the command line, as described in [“Creating an iTool Launch Routine”](#) on page 103.



Appendix A

Controlling iTools from the IDL Command Line

This appendix describes mechanisms that allow you to control an existing iTool from the IDL command line.

| | | | |
|--|-----|--|-----|
| Overview of iTool Programmatic Control | 380 | Changing Property Values | 389 |
| Retrieving an iTool Object Reference | 381 | Running Operations | 391 |
| Retrieving Component Identifiers | 382 | Selecting Items in the iTool | 393 |
| Retrieving Property Information | 385 | Replacing Data in an iTool | 394 |

Overview of iTool Programmatic Control

The iTool framework is designed to let you create tools that are used interactively, in real time. Furthermore, one of the main goals of the iTools framework is to make it easier to create a standard graphical user interface that allows end-users to manipulate tools using a mouse and keyboard.

Still, it may be useful and convenient at times to control iTools programmatically, from the IDL command line or in more traditional routines that do not rely heavily on framework programming. For example, you may want to write a simple IDL batch file that creates a visualization, manipulates it in various ways, and exports an image file containing the result.

While *complete* control over an existing iTool is difficult from “outside” the tool itself, this appendix describes techniques that allow you to control many features of a tool using a small number of framework methods and procedural helper routines. Controlling an iTool using the techniques described here requires a basic familiarity with iTool concepts including property management, operations, and iTool object identifiers. It also departs from purely procedural techniques in that it requires the use of object method calls, albeit at a very basic level.

How to Control an iTool

To control an existing iTool from the IDL command line (and by extension, from within non-iTool routines invoked at the IDL command line), you will do the following things:

1. Use the `ITGETCURRENT` function to retrieve the object reference to an existing iTool.
2. Use the tool object’s `FindIdentifiers` method to retrieve the iTool identifiers of visualizations you wish to alter and operations you wish to execute.
3. Use the tool object’s `DoSetProperty` method to change properties of visualizations or operations.
4. Use the visualization object’s `Select` method to ensure that the proper items are selected, if necessary.
5. Use the tool object’s `DoAction` method to execute operations.
6. Use the tool object’s `CommitActions` method to commit the changes to the tool’s undo/redo buffer, if necessary.

These steps are described in detail in the following sections.

Retrieving an iTool Object Reference

In order to change an existing iTool from the IDL command line (or from a non-iTool routine), you must first retrieve an object reference to the iTool you wish to change.

Use the `TOOL` keyword to the `ITGETCURRENT` function to retrieve the object reference to the currently-active iTool:

```
idTool = ITGETCURRENT(TOOL=oTool)
```

In this example, the variable `idTool` will contain the iTool's object *identifier*, and the variable `oTool` will contain the iTool's object *reference*.

Note that the iTool for which you want to retrieve the object reference must be the currently-active tool. You can ensure that an iTool is the currently-active tool in the following ways:

- An iTool that has just been created is the currently-active tool.
- Select the iTool manually, using the mouse.
- Use the `IDENTIFIER` keyword when creating the iTool to retrieve its object identifier. Then use the `ITCURRENT` procedure to make the iTool active.

```
IPLOT, data, IDENTIFIER=idTool  
... other IDL commands ...  
ITCURRENT, idTool
```

Retrieving Component Identifiers

In order to affect an item within an iTool — change a property of a visualization, for example, or apply an operation — you must first retrieve the *identifier* for the item. iTool identifiers are described in detail in “[iTool Object Identifiers](#)” on page 28.

In the case of operations, you *may* be able to construct the appropriate identifier string based on visual inspection of the hierarchy shown in the Operations Browser coupled with your knowledge of the iTools framework. Similarly, in the case of visualizations, you *may* be able to construct the identifier string based on visual inspection of the hierarchy shown in the Visualization Browser. However, the `FindIdentifiers` method of the `IDLitTool` class lets you programmatically (and unambiguously) retrieve the identifier of any item in the current iTool’s component object hierarchy.

Using the FindIdentifiers Method

Use the `FindIdentifiers` method to retrieve the full object identifier for an iTool component object: a visualization, an operation, a view, a window — any component that exists in the current iTool’s component object hierarchy. Once you have the identifier for a component object, you can use iTool framework methods to affect that object as described in the later sections of this chapter.

The syntax for the `FindIdentifiers` method is:

```
Result = Obj->IDLitTool::FindIdentifiers([Pattern] [, Keywords])
```

where *Obj* is an `IDLitTool` object and *Result* is a string array containing the full object identifiers of iTool component objects that contain the string specified by *Pattern*. (See “[IDLitTool::FindIdentifiers](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for complete information on the keywords accepted.)

Note on Pattern Matching

The `FindIdentifiers` method finds matches for *Pattern* in full object identifiers using the same rules as the `STRMATCH` function, with the exception that searches are *case-insensitive*. In almost all cases, you will want to use wildcard characters to allow a substring of the full identifier to be matched. See the examples below for additional information.

FindIdentifier Examples

For these examples, suppose you have an iSurface tool created by the following statement:

```
ISURFACE, DIST(40)
```

The full object identifier for this surface visualization looks something like:

```
/TOOLS/SURFACE TOOL/WINDOW/VIEW_1/VISUALIZATION LAYER/DATA  
SPACE/SURFACE
```

If you retrieve an object reference to our surface tool using the following statement:

```
void = ITGETCURRENT(TOOL=surfaceTool)
```

you might suppose that the following statement would return the identifier string shown above:

```
PRINT, surfaceTool->FindIdentifiers('surface')
```

In fact, this statement returns no results, since there is no object identifier in the iTool hierarchy that consists solely of the string 'surface'.

You might next try the following statement:

```
PRINT, surfaceTool->FindIdentifiers('*surface*')
```

to match any object identifier that contains the string 'surface'. This statement will produce *many* lines of output; in fact, it will list every component in the surface tool's object hierarchy, because each object identifier contains the string '/TOOLS/SURFACE TOOL'.

You might next try the following statement:

```
PRINT, surfaceTool->FindIdentifiers('*surface')
```

to match any object identifier that contains the string 'surface' at the end of the identifier. This statement will produce output that looks something like this:

```
/TOOLS/SURFACE TOOL/OPERATIONS/FILE/NEW/SURFACE  
/TOOLS/SURFACE TOOL/CURRENT STYLE/VISUALIZATIONS/SURFACE  
/TOOLS/SURFACE TOOL/CURRENT STYLE/VISUALIZATIONS/ISOSURFACE  
/TOOLS/SURFACE TOOL/WINDOW/VIEW_1/VISUALIZATION LAYER/DATA  
SPACE/SURFACE
```

Here, a smaller number of identifiers match the pattern, but still more than you are interested in.

Finally, you might try the following statement:

```
PRINT, surfaceTool->FindIdentifiers('*surface*', /VISUALIZATIONS)
```

This statement will match any object identifier *in the visualization layer* that contains the string 'surface'. It will produce output that looks something like this:

```
/TOOLS/SURFACE TOOL/WINDOW/VIEW_1/VISUALIZATION LAYER/DATA  
SPACE/SURFACE
```

which is the identifier for the plot line just created. Note that if your iTool contained more than one surface visualization, identifiers for each surface would be returned.

Similarly, suppose you wanted the object identifier for the New Surface *operation*. Either of the following statements:

```
PRINT, surfaceTool->FindIdentifiers('*surface', /OPERATIONS)
PRINT, surfaceTool->FindIdentifiers('*/operations/*surface')
```

produce the following output:

```
/TOOLS/SURFACE TOOL/OPERATIONS/FILE/NEW/SURFACE
```

See “[IDLitTool::FindIdentifiers](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for complete information on the keywords accepted by this method.

Warning

The FindIdentifiers method recurses through the entire object hierarchy of the specified object, which may be slow for large container hierarchies. If you find it necessary to call FindIdentifiers multiple times, it may be more efficient to use a single call with one or more wildcards (“*”) to return all relevant identifiers, and then perform the necessary searches using the returned list.

Retrieving Property Information

While it is possible to execute an iTool operation with just the operation’s component identifier (as described in “[Running Operations](#)” on page 391), in many cases you will want to modify the operation’s properties before execution. In other cases you may not wish to execute an operation at all — you may only be interested in changing the value of one or more properties of a given component object. Modifying the properties of an iTool component (as described in “[Changing Property Values](#)” on page 389) requires that you know the *property identifier* of the component object property you wish to change.

Retrieving Property Identifiers

Once you have retrieved the component identifier string for an iTool component (as described in “[Retrieving Component Identifiers](#)” on page 382), you can use the component identifier to retrieve the property identifiers for properties of that component. For example, the following statements create an iPlot tool containing some random data, retrieve the component object identifier for the Smooth operation, and print the property identifiers:

```

I PLOT, RANDOMU(seed, 15)
idTool = ITGETCURRENT(TOOL=oTool)
idSmooth= oTool->FindIdentifiers('*smooth*', /OPERATIONS)
objSmooth = oTool->GetByIdentifier(idSmooth)
propsSmooth = objSmooth->QueryProperty()
PRINT, propsSmooth

```

IDL prints:

```

NAME DESCRIPTION TYPES SHOW_EXECUTION_UI WIDTH

```

The strings displayed are the property identifiers for the Smooth operation.

Note that after we have retrieved the full identifier for the Smooth operation, we use the identifier as the argument to the `GetByIdentifier` method of the `IDLitContainer` class. The `GetByIdentifier` method returns the *object reference* to the Smooth operation; we need the object reference in order to then call the `QueryProperty` method, which returns a string array containing the property identifiers.

See “[IDLitComponent::QueryProperty](#)” and “[IDLitContainer::GetByIdentifier](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional details on these methods.

Property Attribute Information

Knowing the property identifier for the property you wish to change is often enough, if you are already familiar with the property, its data type, and range of possible values. For example, suppose you want to change the line thickness of a plot line. You may already know that the value of the THICK property of a plot line is a floating-point integer, so you can confidently call the DoSetProperty method as described in “[Changing Property Values](#)” on page 389, specifying a floating-point number for the new line thickness value.

But you may not always know the data type or range of allowed values for a given property. If you have the property identifier, you can get additional information on the property using the GetPropertyAttribute method of the IDLitComponent class.

For example, suppose we want to set the value of the WIDTH property of the Smooth operation. The following statements will retrieve the text description, the data type, and the range of allowed values for the WIDTH property:

```
objSmooth->GetPropertyAttribute, 'WIDTH', DESCRIPTION=desc, $
    TYPE=type, VALID_RANGE=range
PRINT, desc, type, range
```

IDL prints:

```
Smooth Filter Width.      2      0
```

The first attribute (DESCRIPTION) is the text description of the property. The second attribute (TYPE) is the data type accepted by the property; the description of the TYPE attribute reveals that the value 2 indicates that the property accepts an integer value. The third attribute (VALID_RANGE) is the range of accepted values; the scalar value 0 indicates that there are no restrictions on the range of integer values allowed.

See “[IDLitComponent::GetPropertyAttribute](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional information on retrieving property attributes. “[An Example Property Information Retrieval Routine](#)” on page 387 discusses an example utility (included in the IDL distribution) that uses these techniques.

Property Value Information

To retrieve the *current* value of a property, you must use the property identifier and the GetPropertyByIdentifier method of the IDLitComponent class.

For example, the following statements will retrieve and print the current value of the WIDTH property of the Smooth operation in the current iTool:

```
success = objSmooth->GetPropertyByIdentifier('WIDTH', width_value)
```

```
IF success THEN PRINT, 'Width is: ', width_value ELSE $
  PRINT, 'No value returned'
```

IDL prints:

```
Width is:          3
```

The `GetPropertyByIdentifier` function method returns a value of 1 (one) if the property value was retrieved successfully, or 0 (zero) otherwise. In the example, the property value of 3 is successfully retrieved.

Note that you could also use the `GetProperty` method:

```
objSmooth->GetProperty, WIDTH=width_value
PRINT, 'Width is: ', width_value
```

While this is slightly simpler, it makes the error handling slightly trickier, and forces you to hard-code the name of the property whose value you are retrieving.

See “[IDLitComponent::GetPropertyByIdentifier](#)” in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for additional information on retrieving property values.

An Example Property Information Retrieval Routine

An example utility routine named `itpropertyreport.pro` uses the methods discussed in the previous sections to retrieve property information.

Example Code

The routine `itpropertyreport.pro` is included in the `examples/doc/itools` directory of the IDL distribution.

Call `itpropertyreport.pro` by specifying an iTool object reference and the full object identifier (as returned by the `FindIdentifiers` method) of the component whose properties you would like to inspect. For example, calling `itpropertyreport` with the iTool object reference and operation identifier used above:

```
itpropertyreport, oTool, idSmooth
```

produces the following output:

```
Properties of /TOOLS/PLOT TOOL/OPERATIONS/OPERATIONS/FILTER/SMOOTH
```

| Identifier | Name | Type |
|-------------------|-------------|---------|
| ----- | ---- | ---- |
| NAME | Name | STRING |
| DESCRIPTION | Description | STRING |
| TYPES | TYPES | USERDEF |
| SHOW_EXECUTION_UI | Show dialog | BOOLEAN |
| WIDTH | Width | INTEGER |

Note

The `itpropertyreport` utility produces formatted text output in the IDL output log. This output will be correctly aligned only if the command log uses a fixed-width font.

Additionally, you can set the `VALUE` keyword to `itpropertyreport` to display a column containing the current values of the properties listed; you can set the `DESCRIPTION` keyword to display a column containing the text description of the property. You may want to inspect the `itpropertyreport.pro` file for additional information and example code.

Changing Property Values

Given the object identifier for a property, there are two ways to change the property value: using the `DoSetProperty` method of the `IDLitTool` class, and using the `SetProperty` method of the `IDLitComponent` class. When changing the value of a registered property, in most cases, it is better to use the `DoSetProperty` method.

Using the `DoSetProperty` Method

Use the `DoSetProperty` method of the `IDLitTool` class to change the value of a property associated with an item in the `iTool` hierarchy. Using the `DoSetProperty` method has two advantages over using the `SetProperty` method:

1. `DoSetProperty` takes an object identifier as its argument; there is no need to retrieve the object reference to the property you wish to change.
2. The `DoSetProperty` method takes care of adding the property change to the `iTool`'s undo-redo buffer.

Warning

To use the `DoSetProperty` method, the property whose value is being changed must be a *registered* property of the selected `iTool` component object. If the property is not registered, use the `SetProperty` method instead.

For example, suppose you have created an `iPlot` tool with the following command:

```
I PLOT, RANDOMU(seed, 15)
```

To change the color of the plot line, you could use the following statements:

```
idTool = ITGETCURRENT(TOOL=oTool)
idPlot = oTool->FindIdentifiers('*plot', /VISUALIZATIONS)
success = oTool->DoSetProperty(idPlot, 'COLOR', [40,120,200])
oTool->CommitActions
```

Warning

Make sure you understand what the `FindIdentifiers` method will return for a given search string and keyword; care is necessary to ensure that you retrieve the identifier for the correct item. See [“Retrieving Component Identifiers”](#) on page 382 for details.

Note that the *property identifier* used as the second argument to the `DoSetProperty` method is often, but not always, the same as the property *name* that is displayed in the

Visualization Browser property sheet. Methods for finding property identifiers are discussed in detail in [“Retrieving Property Information”](#) on page 385.

The third argument to the Do SetProperty method is the new value for the property. Techniques for determining the data type and allowed values for a given property are described in [“Property Attribute Information”](#) on page 386.

Finally, the CommitActions method of the IDLitool class commits all pending transactions to the undo-redo buffer and refreshes the current window. Note that the property changes are not undoable until the changes have been committed with a call to the CommitActions method.

Tip

You can do make several calls to the Do SetProperty method, followed by a single call to the CommitActions method. This will bundle all of the SetProperty actions into a single item in the undo-redo buffer.

Using the SetProperty Method

Use the SetProperty method of the component object class to change the value of a property associated with an item in the iTool hierarchy. Using the SetProperty method requires that you retrieve an object reference to the object whose properties you are setting.

Note

If the property whose value you want to change is not registered, you *must* use the SetProperty method rather than the Do SetProperty method.

For example, suppose you have created an iPlot tool with the following command:

```
I PLOT, RANDOMU(seed, 15)
```

To change the color of the plot line, you could use the following statements:

```
idTool = ITGETCURRENT(TOOL=oTool)
idPlot = oTool->FindIdentifiers('*plot', /VISUALIZATIONS)
oPlot = oTool->GetByIdentifier(idPlot)
oPlot->SetProperty,COLOR=[40,120,200]
oTool->RefreshCurrentWindow
```

Warning

Property changes made using the SetProperty method are not placed in the undo-redo buffer.

Running Operations

Use the DoAction method of the IDLitTool class to execute an operation on the currently selected item in the currently selected iTool. For example, suppose you have created an iPlot tool with the following command:

```
I PLOT, RANDOMU(seed, 15)
```

To call the Median operation on the plot line, you could use the following statements:

```
idTool = ITGETCURRENT(TOOL=oTool)
idMedian = oTool->FindIdentifiers('*median*', /OPERATIONS)
success = oTool->DoAction(idMedian)
```

The Median operation would be applied. If the SHOW_EXECUTION_UI property for the operation is set to True, the operation's dialog appears before the operation is executed. See [“Note on the SHOW_EXECUTION_UI Property”](#) on page 391.

Warning

This example relies on the fact that the plot is selected after the iTool is created; see [“Selecting Items in the iTool”](#) on page 393 for details on how to set the selection explicitly.

You can insert one or more calls to the DoSetProperty method (as described in [“Changing Property Values”](#) on page 389) before the call to the DoAction method. For example, to change the Width property used by the Median operation to 9, and set the Even Average property to True you could do the following:

```
idTool = ITGETCURRENT(TOOL=oTool)
idMedian = oTool->FindIdentifiers('*median*', /OPERATIONS)
success = oTool->DoSetProperty(idMedian, 'WIDTH', 9)
success = oTool->DoSetProperty(idMedian, 'EVEN', 1)
success = oTool->DoAction(idMedian)
```

In this example both property changes and the application of the Median operation are entered into the undo-redo buffer as a single item.

Note on the SHOW_EXECUTION_UI Property

Every iTool operation included with the standard iTools that has a visible user interface has a registered property named SHOW_EXECUTION_UI. Setting this property to 1 (True) will cause the operation's graphical user interface to be displayed before the operation is executed, giving the user the option to change any parameters the operation may have. If the property is set to 0 (False), the operation will execute without displaying the graphical user interface.

When executing operations using the mechanisms described in this chapter, you may want to set the `SHOW_EXECUTION_UI` property to 0 (False), since leaving it set to True will require user interaction. To change the value of the property temporarily, you could use statements similar to the following to first retrieve the value of the property, save that value, and set it back after the operation has executed:

```
idTool = ITGETCURRENT(TOOL=oTool)
idMedian = oTool->FindIdentifiers('*median*', /OPERATIONS)
oMedian = oTool->GetByIdentifier(idMedian)
oMedian->GetProperty, SHOW_EXECUTION_UI=init_val
oMedian->SetProperty, SHOW_EXECUTION_UI=0
success = oTool->DoAction(idMedian)
oMedian->SetProperty, SHOW_EXECUTION_UI=init_val
```

Notice that we retrieve an object reference to the Median operation and use the `SetProperty` method rather than the `DoSetProperty` method to set the value of the `SHOW_EXECUTION_UI` property. We do this because we do not want the last call to `SetProperty` to be placed in the undo-redo buffer. Since the call to the `DoAction` method will place all outstanding changes into the undo-redo buffer, all of the changes except for the very last are undoable. But since the last line simply sets the value of the `SHOW_EXECUTION_UI` property back to its initial value, there is no need to place this change in the undo-redo buffer as a separate item — in fact we would rather it not be placed in the buffer at all.

If we used `DoSetProperty` for the final change, the change would be placed in the undo-redo buffer the next time actions were committed, either by a call to `DoAction` or by a call to `CommitActions`.

Note

We *could* have used the `GetPropertyByIdentifier` and `SetPropertyByIdentifier` methods rather than the `GetProperty` and `SetProperty` methods. This would not affect the outcome of the series of statements shown, and since the name of the property whose value we are getting and setting is fixed, using `GetProperty` and `SetProperty` works just as well.

Selecting Items in the iTool

When you execute an operation in an iTool, the operation will be applied to the currently selected item. You can use the `Select` method of the `IDLitVisualization` class to ensure that the correct item is selected.

To select an item, do the following:

1. Find the object's full identifier as described in [“Retrieving Component Identifiers”](#) on page 382. Note that only visualizations and annotations can be selected.
2. Get an object reference to the object using the `GetByIdentifier` method of the `IDLitContainer` class.
3. Call the `Select` method.

Example: Selecting an Item Programmatically

For example, suppose you create an `iPlot` tool with two plot lines, using the following statements:

```
IPLOT, RANDOMU(seed, 15)*FINDGEN(15)
IPLOT, FINDGEN(15), /OVERPLOT
```

After these statements have been executed, the second (straight) plot line will be selected in the tool. To select the first plot line, you would use the following statements:

```
idTool = ITGETCURRENT(TOOL=oTool)
plotIDs = oTool->FindIdentifiers('*plot*', /VISUALIZATIONS)
plotObj0 = oTool->GetByIdentifier(plotIDs[0])
plotObj0->Select
```

To apply the smooth operation to the first plot line (which has now been programmatically selected), setting the value of the `SHOW_EXECUTION_UI` property to 0 (False), you would use the following statements:

```
idSmooth = oTool->FindIdentifiers('*smooth*', /OPERATIONS)
success = oTool->DoSetProperty(idSmooth, 'SHOW_EXECUTION_UI', 0)
success = oTool->DoAction(idSmooth)
```

Replacing Data in an iTool

You can replace or update data in an existing iTool using either of two methods: using the iTool's creation routine and one of the VIEW keywords, or by retrieving the data object and calling the SetData method. Both methods will change the data stored in the Data Manager and will cause the display to be updated automatically.

Using the iTool Creation Routine

You can replace data in an existing iTool by using the iTool's creation command with the VIEW_NUMBER or VIEW_NEXT keyword set to a view that uses the data you wish to replace.

Note

The visualization is removed and recreated when you replace data using this technique. Any property changes you may have made to the old visualization will be lost. To preserve changes made to the visualization, see [“Using the SetData Method”](#) on page 395.

For example, suppose you have an iPlot tool with a single view, created with the following command:

```
I PLOT, myData1
```

Assuming the iPlot tool is selected, the following command will replace the data in the tool (myData1) with a new data set (myData2):

```
I PLOT, myData2, VIEW_NUMBER=1
```

Note

The view number starts at 1, and corresponds to the position of the view *within the graphics window* (not necessarily the position on the screen). In the case of a gridded window layout, views are added to the iTool window beginning in the upper left-hand corner, and proceeding left to right and then down. You can see the position of a given view within the container by inspecting the tree view of the Visualization Browser. You can also re-order views using the items in the **Edit** → **Order** menu in the iTool.

In our example, if myData1 is not in use by any other iTool, it will be removed from the iTools Data Manager by this operation. If myData1 is used by a visualization in another view or another iTool, it will not be deleted.

Note

If the currently-active iTool contains only one view, setting the VIEW_NEXT keyword has the same effect as setting VIEW_NUMBER=1.

Using the SetData Method

You can replace the data that underlies a visualization using the SetData method of the IDLitData class. This technique has the advantage of preserving other changes you may have made to your visualization (property changes, *etc.*), but requires that you first retrieve the object identifier for the data item you want to replace. This, in turn, requires that you know the parameter name of the of the parameter that contains the data.

Retrieving Parameter Names from the Visualization

To retrieve a list of parameter names for a visualization type, use the QueryParameter method of the IDLitParameter class. The following example creates a plot visualization and retrieves the names of the plot visualization's registered parameters:

```
; Create the plot visualization
IPLOT, RANDOMU(seed, 15)
idTool = ITGETCURRENT(TOOL=oTool)

; Retrieve the object reference to the plot visualization object.
idPlot = oTool->FindIdentifiers('*plot', /VISUALIZATIONS)
oPlot = oTool->GetByIdentifier(idPlot)

; Retrieve and print the parameter names.
oPlotParams = oPlot->QueryParameter(COUNT=count)
For i=0,count-1 DO PRINT, oPlotParams[i]
```

IDL prints:

```
Y
X
VERTICES
Y ERROR
X ERROR
PALETTE
VERTEX_COLORS
```

Setting a New Data Value

Once you know the name of the parameter whose data you wish to change, retrieve the IDLitData object associated with that parameter using the GetParameter method of the IDLitParameter class. You can then use the SetData method of the IDLitData

class to insert new data into the parameter. The following example changes the data associated with the “Y” parameter of the plot visualization created in the previous section:

```
oDataY = oPlot->GetParameter('Y')
success = oDataY->SetData(FINDGEN(50))
```

Using the FindIdentifiers Method

It is also possible to use the FindIdentifiers method to retrieve the full identifier of a data object stored in the Data Manager, and use that identifier to retrieve the IDLitData object using the GetByIdentifier method of the IDLitContainer class. While this approach might seem simpler than retrieving the parameter names from the visualization and using the GetParameter method, it has the drawback that identifiers for objects in the Data Manager do not necessarily correspond to a single visualization. As a result, it can be difficult to determine which data item is which, based solely on inspection of the identifier.

Under some circumstances this may not be a problem. For example, if your code creates a new visualization based on data supplied at the command line, you will know that the data object or objects created in the Data Manager will be the last items in the Data Manager container object. The following code creates a new surface visualization using the ISURFACE command, and then immediately retrieves the data identifier of the last data item inserted into the Data Manager:

```
ISURFACE, DIST(40)
idTool = ITGETCURRENT(TOOL=oTool)
allData = oTool->FindIdentifiers(/DATA_MANAGER, COUNT=c)
idDataSurface = allData[c-1]
PRINT, idDataSurface
```

IDL prints:

```
/DATA_MANAGER/SURFACE PARAMETERS/Z
```

You then could use the data identifier to retrieve a reference to the data object and change the data value using the SetData method:

```
oSurfaceData = oTool->GetByIdentifier(idDataSurface)
success = oSurfaceData->SetData(1/(DIST(40)+1))
```



Appendix B iTool Compound Widgets

This appendix contains reference documentation for IDL compound widgets used by the iTools.

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| CW_ITMENU | 399 | CW_ITTOOLBAR | 411 |
| CW_ITPANEL | 404 | CW_ITWINDOW | 416 |

Overview of iTools Compound Widgets

The compound widgets described in [this appendix](#) provide the base functionality needed to create an iTool user interface using IDL widgets. These widgets are useful only in the context of creating an iTool interface; they require the presence of the iTools system object to function properly. Attempts to use these widgets outside the context of the iTools will not succeed.

Before attempting to use these compound widgets to create an iTool user interface, you should be familiar with (at a minimum) the following concepts:

- The iTool object hierarchy (see [Chapter 2, “iTool System Architecture”](#))
- Creating an iTool (see [Chapter 5, “Creating an iTool”](#))
- iTool user interface concepts (see [Chapter 11, “iTool User Interface Architecture”](#))
- Creating an iTool interface using IDL widgets (see [Chapter 15, “Creating a Custom iTool Widget Interface”](#))

CW_ITMENU

The CW_ITMENU function creates a top-level pulldown menu compound widget. The menu items in the pulldown menu correspond to the operations contained in a specified container object within the OPERATIONS container of the associated iTool. (See “[iTool Object Hierarchy](#)” on page 31 for a description of the iTool object hierarchy.)

Warning

This routine can only be used in the context of a user-created iTool. See “[Overview of iTools Compound Widgets](#)” on page 398 for details.

The CW_ITMENU widget automatically performs the following actions:

1. For each child in the folder, creates either a submenu (if the child is a container object) or a menu item (if the child is a registered operation). In both cases the child’s NAME property is used for the menu item value.
 - If the child is a container, CW_ITMENU recursively creates submenus and menu items for that child’s children.
 - If the child is an operation, CW_ITMENU creates a menu item. The child’s ACCELERATOR property is used for the keyboard accelerator (unless the CONTEXT_MENU keyword is set). The DISABLE property is used to determine initial sensitivity. If the CHECKED property is set, a checked menu item is created. If SEPARATOR is set, a menu separator is inserted before the menu item. See [IDLitTool::RegisterOperation](#) for details on using these properties.
2. Registers the newly-created menu with the specified user interface object.
3. Adds itself as an *observer* of the specified container. If any changes occur to items within the container, then the menu will be notified and will

automatically update itself. The CW_ITMENU widget listens for the following messages:

| Message | Value | Description / Result |
|-------------|---------------------|--|
| ADDITEMS | Object identifier | An object was added to the container. New menu and submenu items are added as necessary. |
| REMOVEITEMS | Object identifier | An object was removed from the container. Menu and submenu items are removed as necessary. |
| SELECT | 0 or 1 | For checked menu items, the menu item is displayed as checked (1) or unchecked (0). |
| SENSITIVE | 0 or 1 | The menu item is displayed as sensitive (1) or insensitive (0). |
| SETPROPERTY | Property identifier | If the NAME property changed, the menu item name is updated with the new value. |

Table B-1: Messages Understood by CW_ITMENU

See “[iTool Messaging System](#)” on page 41 for a discussion of observers and notifications.

4. When a menu item is selected, calls the [IDLitTool::DoAction](#) method to execute the corresponding operation.

Syntax

```
Result = CW_ITMENU(Parent, UI, Target [, /CONTEXT_MENU]
[, UNAME=string] [, UVALUE=value] )
```

Return Value

This function returns the widget ID of the newly-created pulldown menu.

Arguments

Parent

The widget ID of the parent for the new menu. The parent must be one of the following:

1. A base widget.
2. A widget created using the MBAR keyword on a top-level base.
3. A button widget which has the MENU keyword set.
4. If the `CONTEXT_MENU` keyword is set, a widget that supports context events.

UI

An object reference to the IDLitUI object associated with the iTool. See “[User Interface Object](#)” on page 341 for information on creating user interface objects.

Target

A string specifying the identifier of an item of class IDLitContainer that contains the items to be included in the menu. *Target* can be either a full identifier or relative to the IDLitTool object associated with the user interface object specified by *UI*.

All items within the *Target* container must either be of class IDLitContainer or be operations registered with the IDLitTool object associated with the user interface object specified by *UI*.

Keywords

CONTEXT_MENU

Set this keyword to create a context menu instead of a standard pulldown menu. If this keyword is set, *Parent* must be a widget of one of the following types: `WIDGET_BASE`, `WIDGET_DRAW`, `WIDGET_TEXT`, `WIDGET_LIST`, `WIDGET_PROPERTY SHEET`, `WIDGET_TABLE`, `WIDGET_TEXT`, or `WIDGET_TREE`.

Note

If the `CONTEXT_MENU` keyword is set, the `ACCELERATOR` property is ignored for all contained items.

UNAME

Set this keyword to a string that can be used to identify the widget in your code. You can associate a name with each widget in a specific hierarchy, and then use that name to query the widget hierarchy and get the correct widget ID.

To query the widget hierarchy, use the [WIDGET_INFO](#) function with the `FIND_BY_UNAME` keyword. The UNAME should be unique to the widget hierarchy because the `FIND_BY_UNAME` keyword returns the ID of the first widget with the specified name.

UVALUE

The “user value” to be assigned to the widget. Each widget can contain a user-specified value of any data type and organization. This value is not used by the widget in any way, but exists entirely for the convenience of the IDL programmer. This keyword allows you to set this value when the widget is first created. If UVALUE is not present, the widget’s initial user value is undefined.

The user value for a widget can be accessed and modified at any time by using the `GET_UVALUE` and `SET_UVALUE` keywords to the [WIDGET_CONTROL](#) procedure.

Keywords to `WIDGET_CONTROL` and `WIDGET_INFO`

The widget ID returned by most compound widgets is actually the ID of the compound widget’s base widget. This means that many keywords to the `WIDGET_CONTROL` and `WIDGET_INFO` routines that affect or return information on base widgets can be used with compound widgets.

See “[Creating a Compound Widget](#)” in Chapter 28 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for a more complete discussion of controlling compound widgets using `WIDGET_CONTROL` and `WIDGET_INFO`.

Widget Events Returned by the `CW_ITMENU` Widget

`CW_IT*` compound widgets do not return widget events. All interaction with the iTool user interface is accomplished via the iTool messaging system and the callback mechanism implemented in the user interface creation routine.

Version History

Introduced: 6.1

See Also

Chapter 15, “Creating a Custom iTool Widget Interface”, [CW_ITPANEL](#),
[CW_ITSTATUSBAR](#), [CW_ITTOOLBAR](#), [CW_ITWINDOW](#)

CW_ITPANEL

The CW_ITPANEL function creates an iTool base compound widget that will contain any *user interface panels* registered with the specified IDLitUI object's associated iTool. See [Chapter 14, “Creating a User Interface Panel”](#) for information on user interface panels.

Warning

This routine can only be used in the context of a user-created iTool. See [“Overview of iTools Compound Widgets”](#) on page 398 for details.

The CW_ITPANEL widget automatically performs the following actions:

1. Creates a base widget to contain the registered user interface panels.
2. Constructs any user interface panels registered with the iTool using tab widgets. (See [ITREGISTER](#) for information on registering a user interface panel.)
3. Adds itself as an *observer* of the iTool object. If any changes affecting registered user interface panels occur, then the panel base widget will be notified and will automatically update itself. The CW_ITPANEL widget listens for the following messages:

| Message | Value | Description / Result |
|--------------|----------------------------|---|
| ADDUIPANELS | Name of callback procedure | Add a new panel using the specified callback procedure. |
| SHOWUIPANELS | 0 or 1 | Show (1) or hide (0) the UI panel. |

Table B-2: Messages Understood by CW_ITPANEL

See [“iTool Messaging System”](#) on page 41 for a discussion of observers and notifications.

4. Handles events generated by the show/hide panel button.

Resizing CW_ITPANEL Widgets

The CW_ITPANEL widget does not automatically resize itself to the size of its parent widget. To resize the CW_ITPANEL widget, your event handling code must

call the `CW_ITPANEL_RESIZE` procedure to specify the new size. The `CW_ITPANEL_RESIZE` procedure has the following interface:

```
CW_ITPANEL_RESIZE, Widget_ID, Ysize
```

where `Widget_ID` is the `CW_ITPANEL` widget ID, and `Ysize` is the new height of the panel.

Syntax

```
Result = CW_ITPANEL(Parent, UI [, ORIENTATION=[0 | 1]] [, UNAME=string]  
[, UVALUE=value] )
```

Return Value

This function returns the widget ID of the newly-created panel widget.

Arguments

Parent

The widget ID of the parent base widget.

UI

An object reference of the `IDLitUI` object associated with the iTool. See “[User Interface Object](#)” on page 341 for information on creating user interface objects.

Keywords

ORIENTATION

Set this keyword to an integer specifying which side of the parent base the panel is on. Possible values are:

- 0: The panel is on the left-hand side of its parent base
- 1: The panel is on the right-hand side of its parent base (this is the default)

Note

The `ORIENTATION` keyword does not affect where the panel widget is placed; it only controls how the panel show/hide button is displayed. Place the panel on the left or right side of the widget interface using normal widget layout techniques.

UNAME

Set this keyword to a string that can be used to identify the widget in your code. You can associate a name with each widget in a specific hierarchy, and then use that name to query the widget hierarchy and get the correct widget ID.

To query the widget hierarchy, use the `WIDGET_INFO` function with the `FIND_BY_UNAME` keyword. The `UNAME` should be unique to the widget hierarchy because the `FIND_BY_UNAME` keyword returns the ID of the first widget with the specified name.

UVALUE

The “user value” to be assigned to the widget. Each widget can contain a user-specified value of any data type and organization. This value is not used by the widget in any way, but exists entirely for the convenience of the IDL programmer. This keyword allows you to set this value when the widget is first created. If `UVALUE` is not present, the widget’s initial user value is undefined.

The user value for a widget can be accessed and modified at any time by using the `GET_UVALUE` and `SET_UVALUE` keywords to the `WIDGET_CONTROL` procedure.

Keywords to `WIDGET_CONTROL` and `WIDGET_INFO`

The widget ID returned by most compound widgets is actually the ID of the compound widget’s base widget. This means that many keywords to the `WIDGET_CONTROL` and `WIDGET_INFO` routines that affect or return information on base widgets can be used with compound widgets.

See “[Creating a Compound Widget](#)” in Chapter 28 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for a more complete discussion of controlling compound widgets using `WIDGET_CONTROL` and `WIDGET_INFO`.

Widget Events Returned by the CW_ITPANEL Widget

CW_IT* compound widgets do not return widget events. All interaction with the iTool user interface is accomplished via the iTool messaging system and the callback mechanism implemented in the user interface creation routine.

Version History

Introduced: 6.1

See Also

[Chapter 15, “Creating a Custom iTool Widget Interface”](#), [CW_ITMENU](#), [CW_ITSTATUSBAR](#), [CW_ITTOOLBAR](#), [CW_ITWINDOW](#)

CW_ITSTATUSBAR

The CW_ITSTATUSBAR function creates an iTool status bar compound widget that will contain any *status bars* registered with the specified IDLitUI object's associated iTool. See “[Status Messages](#)” on page 287 for additional details on status bars.

Warning

This routine can only be used in the context of a user-created iTool. See “[Overview of iTools Compound Widgets](#)” on page 398 for details.

The CW_ITSTATUSBAR widget automatically performs the following actions:

1. Creates a base widget to contain the status bars.
2. Constructs any status bars registered with the iTool using label widgets. See [IDLitTool::RegisterStatusBarSegment](#) for details.
3. Adds itself as an *observer* of each status bar segment object. The CW_ITSTATUSBAR widget listens for the following message:

| Message | Value | Description / Result |
|---------|--------|--|
| MESSAGE | String | Change the text of the status bar segment. |

Table B-3: Messages Understood by CW_ITSTATUSBAR

See “[iTool Messaging System](#)” on page 41 for a discussion of observers and notifications.

Tip

By default, iTools include two status bar segments. The StatusMessage and ProbeStatusMessage methods of the IDLitIMessaging class can be used to automatically send the MESSAGE callback to the appropriate status bar segment. See “[Status Messages](#)” on page 287 for details.

Resizing CW_ITSTATUSBAR Widgets

The CW_ITSTATUSBAR widget does not automatically resize itself to the size of its parent widget. To resize the CW_ITSTATUSBAR widget, your event handling code must call the CW_ITSTATUSBAR_RESIZE procedure to specify the new size. The CW_ITSTATUSBAR_RESIZE procedure has the following interface:

```
CW_ITSTATUSBAR_RESIZE, Widget_ID, Xsize
```


where `widget_ID` is the `CW_ITSTATUSBAR` widget ID, and `xsize` is the new width of the status bar.

Syntax

```
Result = CW_ITSTATUSBAR(Parent, UI [, UNAME=string] [, UVALUE=value]
                        [, XSIZE=integer] )
```

Return Value

This function returns the widget ID of the newly-created status bar base widget.

Arguments

Parent

The widget ID of the parent base widget.

UI

An object reference of the `IDLitUI` object associated with the iTool. See “[User Interface Object](#)” on page 341 for information on creating user interface objects.

Keywords

UNAME

Set this keyword to a string that can be used to identify the widget in your code. You can associate a name with each widget in a specific hierarchy, and then use that name to query the widget hierarchy and get the correct widget ID.

To query the widget hierarchy, use the `WIDGET_INFO` function with the `FIND_BY_UNAME` keyword. The `UNAME` should be unique to the widget hierarchy because the `FIND_BY_UNAME` keyword returns the ID of the first widget with the specified name.

UVALUE

The “user value” to be assigned to the widget. Each widget can contain a user-specified value of any data type and organization. This value is not used by the widget in any way, but exists entirely for the convenience of the IDL programmer. This keyword allows you to set this value when the widget is first created. If `UVALUE` is not present, the widget’s initial user value is undefined.

The user value for a widget can be accessed and modified at any time by using the `GET_UVALUE` and `SET_UVALUE` keywords to the [WIDGET_CONTROL](#) procedure.

XSIZE

Set this keyword to an integer specifying the initial width of the status bar. See [“Resizing CW_ITSTATUSBAR Widgets”](#) on page 408 for additional details. The default XSIZE is 640 pixels.

Keywords to WIDGET_CONTROL and WIDGET_INFO

The widget ID returned by most compound widgets is actually the ID of the compound widget’s base widget. This means that many keywords to the `WIDGET_CONTROL` and `WIDGET_INFO` routines that affect or return information on base widgets can be used with compound widgets.

See [“Creating a Compound Widget”](#) in Chapter 28 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for a more complete discussion of controlling compound widgets using `WIDGET_CONTROL` and `WIDGET_INFO`.

Widget Events Returned by the CW_ITSTATUSBAR Widget

`CW_IT*` compound widgets do not return widget events. All interaction with the iTool user interface is accomplished via the iTool messaging system and the callback mechanism implemented in the user interface creation routine.

Version History

Introduced: 6.1

See Also

[Chapter 15, “Creating a Custom iTool Widget Interface”](#), [CW_ITMENU](#), [CW_ITPANEL](#), [CW_ITTOOLBAR](#), [CW_ITWINDOW](#)

CW_ITTOOLBAR

The CW_ITTOOLBAR function creates a toolbar base compound widget. The items in the toolbar correspond to the operations or manipulators contained in a specified container object within the OPERATIONS container of the associated iTool. (See [“iTool Object Hierarchy”](#) on page 31 for a description of the iTool object hierarchy.)

Warning

This routine can only be used in the context of a user-created iTool. See [“Overview of iTools Compound Widgets”](#) on page 398 for details.

The CW_ITTOOLBAR widget automatically performs the following actions:

1. For each item in the container, creates either a bitmap button or a droplist/combobox:
 - If the item was registered with the DROPLIST_ITEMS property set, a droplist or combobox is created. If the DROPLIST_EDIT property is set on the item, an editable combobox widget is included on the toolbar — otherwise a droplist is included. The value of the DROPLIST_INDEX property is used to select the initial value. The value of the DISABLE property determines the initial sensitivity of the droplist or combobox. See [IDLitTool::RegisterOperation](#) for details on using these properties.
 - If the item was not registered with the DROPLIST_ITEMS property set, a bitmap button is created. The value of the item’s ICON property is used for the bitmap filename (or, if the ICON property is not set, the file resource/bitmaps/new.bmp is used). The value of the DISABLE property determines the initial sensitivity of the button. The value of the NAME property is used for the button tooltip.
2. Registers itself with the specified user interface object.
3. Adds itself as an *observer* of the specified container. If any changes occur to items within the container, then the toolbar will be notified and will

automatically update itself. The CW_ITTOOLBAR widget listens for the following messages:

| Message | Value | Description / Result |
|-------------|---------------------|--|
| ADDITEMS | Object identifier | An object was added to the container. New buttons or droplists are added to the toolbar as necessary. |
| REMOVEITEMS | Object identifier | An object was removed from the container. Buttons or droplists are removed from the toolbar as necessary. |
| SELECT | 0 or 1 | For exclusive toolbars, the exclusive button is displayed as selected (1) or unselected (0). |
| SENSITIVE | 0 or 1 | The button is displayed as sensitive (1) or insensitive (0). |
| SETPROPERTY | Property identifier | If NAME property changed, the button tooltip is updated with the new value. |
| SETVALUE | String value | The droplist or combobox value is changed to match the new string value. If the item is a combobox and the specified string does not match an existing list item, the new value is added at the top. |

Table B-4: Messages Understood by CW_ITTOOLBAR

See “[iTool Messaging System](#)” on page 41 for a discussion of observers and notifications.

4. When a toolbar button or droplist/combobox item is selected, calls the [IDLitTool::DoAction](#) method to execute the corresponding operation.

Syntax

```
Result = CW_ITTOOLBAR(Parent, UI, Target [, /EXCLUSIVE] [, ROW=integer]
    [, UNAME=string] [, UVALUE=value] )
```

Return Value

This function returns the widget ID of the newly-created toolbar base.

Arguments

Parent

The widget ID of the parent base for the new toolbar.

UI

An object reference of the IDLitUI object associated with the iTool. See “[User Interface Object](#)” on page 341 for information on creating user interface objects.

Target

A string specifying the identifier of an item of class IDLitContainer that contains the items to be included in the toolbar. *Target* can either be a full identifier or be relative to the IDLitTool object associated with the user interface object specified by *UI*.

All items within the *Target* container must be operations or manipulators registered with the IDLitTool object associated with the user interface object specified by *UI*.

Keywords

EXCLUSIVE

Set this keyword to create a toolbar with exclusive buttons, where only one button can be selected at a time, and remains selected until another button is selected. The default is to create a pushbutton toolbar, which allows multiple selections.

Note

An EXCLUSIVE toolbar cannot contain a droplist or combobox item.

ROW

Set this keyword equal to an integer specifying the number of rows used for laying out the toolbar buttons and droplists. The default is 1.

Tip

To create a vertical toolbar, set ROW equal to the number of children in the container specified by *Target*.

UNAME

Set this keyword to a string that can be used to identify the widget in your code. You can associate a name with each widget in a specific hierarchy, and then use that name to query the widget hierarchy and get the correct widget ID.

To query the widget hierarchy, use the [WIDGET_INFO](#) function with the FIND_BY_UNAME keyword. The UNAME should be unique to the widget hierarchy because the FIND_BY_UNAME keyword returns the ID of the first widget with the specified name.

UVALUE

The “user value” to be assigned to the widget. Each widget can contain a user-specified value of any data type and organization. This value is not used by the widget in any way, but exists entirely for the convenience of the IDL programmer. This keyword allows you to set this value when the widget is first created. If UVALUE is not present, the widget’s initial user value is undefined.

The user value for a widget can be accessed and modified at any time by using the GET_UVALUE and SET_UVALUE keywords to the [WIDGET_CONTROL](#) procedure.

Keywords to WIDGET_CONTROL and WIDGET_INFO

The widget ID returned by most compound widgets is actually the ID of the compound widget’s base widget. This means that many keywords to the WIDGET_CONTROL and WIDGET_INFO routines that affect or return information on base widgets can be used with compound widgets.

See “[Creating a Compound Widget](#)” in Chapter 28 of the *Building IDL Applications* manual for a more complete discussion of controlling compound widgets using WIDGET_CONTROL and WIDGET_INFO.

Widget Events Returned by the CW_ITTOOLBAR

Widget

CW_IT* compound widgets do not return widget events. All interaction with the iTool user interface is accomplished via the iTool messaging system and the callback mechanism implemented in the user interface creation routine.

Version History

Introduced: 6.1

See Also

[Chapter 15, “Creating a Custom iTool Widget Interface”](#), [CW_ITMENU](#), [CW_ITPANEL](#), [CW_ITSTATUSBAR](#), [CW_ITWINDOW](#)

CW_ITWINDOW

The CW_ITWINDOW function creates an iTool draw widget that contains an IDLitWindow object.

Warning

This routine can only be used in the context of a user-created iTool. See [“Overview of iTools Compound Widgets”](#) on page 398 for details.

The CW_ITWINDOW widget automatically performs the following actions:

1. Creates a scrolling draw widget with the specified dimensions.
2. Adds itself as an *observer* of the underlying IDLitWindow object. The CW_ITWINDOW widget listens for the following message:

| Message | Value | Description / Result |
|-------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| CONTEXTMENU | Menu identifier | Change the current context menu. |

Table B-5: Messages Understood by CW_ITWINDOW

See [“iTool Messaging System”](#) on page 41 for a discussion of observers and notifications.

3. Handles all mouse and keyboard events. See [“IDLitWindow”](#) in the *IDL Reference Guide* manual for a list of the mouse and keyboard callback methods.

Resizing CW_ITWINDOW Widgets

CW_ITWINDOW does not automatically resize itself to fit its parent widget. To resize the widget, your base widget must call the CW_ITWINDOW_RESIZE procedure with the new size. This procedure has the following interface:

```
CW_ITWINDOW_RESIZE, Widget_ID, Xsize, Ysize
```

where `Widget_ID` is the CW_ITWINDOW widget ID, and `Xsize` and `Ysize` are the new visible size of the draw window.

Syntax

```
Result = CW_ITWINDOW(Parent, UI [, DIMENSIONS=[width, height]]
  [, VIRTUAL_DIMENSIONS=[width, height] ] [Also accepts all
  WIDGET_DRAW keywords])
```


Return Value

This function returns the widget ID of the newly-created iTool draw widget.

Arguments

Parent

The widget ID of the parent base widget.

UI

An object reference of the IDLitUI object associated with the iTool. See “[User Interface Object](#)” on page 341 for information on creating user interface objects.

Keywords

DIMENSIONS

Set this keyword to a two-element vector containing the initial width and height of the visible portion of the draw widget. The default is [640, 480].

UNAME

Set this keyword to a string that can be used to identify the widget in your code. You can associate a name with each widget in a specific hierarchy, and then use that name to query the widget hierarchy and get the correct widget ID.

To query the widget hierarchy, use the [WIDGET_INFO](#) function with the `FIND_BY_UNAME` keyword. The UNAME should be unique to the widget hierarchy because the `FIND_BY_UNAME` keyword returns the ID of the first widget with the specified name.

UVALUE

The “user value” to be assigned to the widget. Each widget can contain a user-specified value of any data type and organization. This value is not used by the widget in any way, but exists entirely for the convenience of the IDL programmer. This keyword allows you to set this value when the widget is first created. If UVALUE is not present, the widget’s initial user value is undefined.

The user value for a widget can be accessed and modified at any time by using the `GET_UVALUE` and `SET_UVALUE` keywords to the [WIDGET_CONTROL](#) procedure.

VIRTUAL_DIMENSIONS

Set this keyword to a two-element vector containing the width and height of the virtual canvas. The default is to use the same values as DIMENSIONS.

WIDGET_DRAW Keywords Accepted

See [WIDGET_DRAW](#) for the description of the following keywords:

[APP_SCROLL](#), [BUTTON_EVENTS](#), [CLASSNAME](#), [COLOR_MODEL](#), [COLORS](#),
[EVENT_FUNC](#), [EVENT_PRO](#), [EXPOSE_EVENTS](#), [FRAME](#),
[FUNC_GET_VALUE](#), [GRAPHICS_LEVEL](#), [GROUP_LEADER](#),
[IGNORE_ACCELERATORS](#), [KEYBOARD_EVENTS](#), [KILL_NOTIFY](#),
[MOTION_EVENTS](#), [NO_COPY](#), [NOTIFY_REALIZE](#), [PRO_SET_VALUE](#),
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[X_SCROLL_SIZE](#), [YOFFSET](#), [YSIZE](#), [Y_SCROLL_SIZE](#)

Widget Events Returned by the CW_ITWINDOW Widget

CW_IT* compound widgets do not return widget events. All interaction with the iTool user interface is accomplished via the iTool messaging system and the callback mechanism implemented in the user interface creation routine.

Version History

Introduced: 6.1

See Also

[Chapter 15](#), “Creating a Custom iTool Widget Interface”, [CW_ITMENU](#),
[CW_ITPANEL](#), [CW_ITSTATUSBAR](#), [CW_ITTOOLBAR](#)



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