Getting Help

Overview

There are a number of sources of information for learning about Igor Pro. The most important are:

- The Guided Tour
- The Igor help system
- The Igor Pro online manual
- The example experiments in the Examples folder
- The Igor mailing list
- The IgorExchange user-to-user support web page

The Guided Tour

The Igor guided tour is indispensible for learning Igor.

The time you spend doing the guided tour will be repaid many times over in productivity. To do the guided tour, choose Help→Getting Started.

The same material is available in the first two chapters of this manual: **Introduction to Igor Pro** on page I-1 and **Guided Tour of Igor Pro** on page I-11.

Online Manual

The Igor Pro installer installs the entire Igor Pro manual as an Adobe PDF file. The PDF manual contains the same information as the online help files but in the more familiar PDF format.

You can open the manual by choosing Help→Manual or by double-clicking the IgorMan.pdf file in "Igor Pro 7 Folder/Manual".

The manual is not available in hard-copy form.

Online Help

Igor's online help system consists of these components:

- The Igor help browser
- Igor help files
- Tool tips

The Igor Help Browser

The Igor Help Browser is designed to provide quick access to the most frequently-used Igor reference material and also to provide a starting point in searching for other kinds of information. You can display the Igor Help Browser by:

- Choosing Help→Igor Help Browser
- Pressing the help key (Macintosh only)
- Pressing the F1 key (Windows only)
- Clicking the question-mark icon in the lower/right corner of the command window

Igor Help Files

The Igor installer places help files primarily in "Igor Pro 7 Folder/Igor Help Files" and in "Igor Pro 7 Folder/More Help Files".

When Igor starts up, it automatically creates help windows by opening the Igor help files stored in "Igor Pro 7 Folder/Igor Help Files" and in "Igor Pro User Files/Igor Help Files". You can display a help window using the Help Files tab of the Help Browser or by choosing it from the Help Windows submenu in the Help menu.

To see a list of topics in open help files, use the Igor Help Browser Help Topics tab.

To search all installed help files, whether open or not, use the Igor Help Browser Search Igor Files tab.

Hiding and Killing a Help Window

When you click the close button in a help window, Igor hides it.

Usually there is no reason to kill a help file, but if you want to kill one, you must press Option (*Macintosh*) or Alt (*Windows*) while clicking the close button.

Executing Commands from a Help Window

Help windows often show example Igor commands. To execute a command or a section of commands from a help window, select the command text and press Control-Enter or Control-Return. This sends the selected text to the command line and starts execution.

Tool Tips

Igor provides tool tips for various icons, dialog items, and other visual features. You can turn these tips on or off using the Show Tool Tips checkbox in the Miscellaneous Settings dialog. To display this setting, choose Misc→Miscellaneous Settings and select the Help category.

You can also use tool tips to get information about traces in graphs and columns in tables. Use Graph→Show Trace Info Tags and Table→Show Column Info Tags to turn these tips on and off.

Searching Igor Files

You can search Igor help files and procedure files using the Search Igor Files tab of the Igor Help Browser.

The search expression can consist of one or more (up to 8) terms. Terms are separated by the word "and". Here are some examples:

interpolation	*One term*
spline interpolation	*One term*
spline and interpolation	*Two terms*
spline and interpolation and smoothing	*Three terms*

The second example finds the exact phrase "spline interpolation" while the third example finds sections that contain the words "spline" and "interpolation", not necessarily one right after the other.

The only keyword supported in the search expression is "and". Quotation marks in the search expression don't mean anything special and should not be used.

If your search expression includes more than one term, a text box appears in which you can enter a number that defines what "and" means. For example, if you enter 10, this means that the secondary terms must appear within 10 paragraphs of the primary term to constitute a hit. A value of 0 means that the terms must appear in the same paragraph. In a plain text file, such as a procedure file, a paragraph is a single line of text. Blank lines count as one paragraph.

To speed up searches when entering multiple search terms, enter the least common term first. For example, searching help files for "hidden and axis and graph" is faster than searching for "graph and axis and hidden" because "hidden" is less common than "graph".

Example Experiments

Igor Pro comes with a large collection of examples which demonstrate Igor features and techniques. You can access them using the File→Example Experiments submenu.

Igor Mailing List

The Igor mailing list is an Internet discussion list that provides a way for Igor Pro users to help one another and to share solutions and ideas. WaveMetrics also uses the list to post information on the latest Igor developments. For information about subscribing and other details about the mailing list, please visit this web page:

`http://www.wavemetrics.com/users/mailinglist.htm`

IgorExchange

IgorExchange is a user-to-user support and collaboration web site sponsored by WaveMetrics but run by and for Igor users. For information about IgorExchange, please visit this web page:

`http://www.igorexchange.com`

Updating Igor

WaveMetrics periodically releases free updates for Igor. Updates provide bug fixes and sometimes new features.

Igor Pro checks for available updates during startup by contacting one of our web sites. This update check is implemented to minimize any performance impact on starting Igor.

If an update is found, Igor presents a dialog in which you can choose to download the update, skip notifications about the current update, or be reminded later about the update. You can also choose to view the release notes for the update.

You can disable automatic update checking using the Updates section of the Miscellaneous Settings dialog. You can also enable checking for beta versions.

You can manually check for updates at any time by choosing Help→Updates for Igor Pro. This works regardless of whether automatic update checking is enabled.

If your Internet access requires a proxy server or other unusual configuration, Igor's update checking mechanism may fail. In those cases you can always go to http://www.wavemetrics.net to see if an update is available.

Technical Support

WaveMetrics provides technical support via email.

To send an email to WaveMetrics support, start by choosing Help→Contact Support. This creates an email containing information about your Igor installation, such as your Igor serial number and the Igor version, which we need to provide support.

In most cases, we need to reproduce your problem in order to solve it. It is best if you can provide a simplified example showing the problem.

For information on upgrades and other nontechnical information, send queries to:

`sales@wavemetrics.com`

World Wide Web

You will find our Web site at:

`http://www.wavemetrics.com/`

You can also choose Help→WaveMetrics Home Page.

Our Web site contains a page for searching our support database, and links to Igor-related FTP sites and to Igor users' Web pages. In addition, it contains a number of cool graphs. We are always grateful for new cool graphs. Contact us at sales@wavemetrics.com if you have a cool graph to share.

Help Shortcuts

Action	Shortcut (*Macintosh*)	Shortcut (*Windows*)
To activate the Igor Help Browser	Choose Help→Igor Help Browser or click the Igor Help Browser icon in the lower-right corner of the command window.	Press F1, choose Help→Igor Help Browser, or click the Igor Help Browser icon in the lower-right corner of the command window.
To get a contextual menu of commonly-used actions	Control-click the body of an Igor help window.	Right-click the body of an Igor help window.
To jump to a topic in an Igor help window	Click a blue underlined topic link in the help window.	Click a blue underlined topic link in the help window.
To jump back to recently visited topics	Click the Go Back button at the bottom of the help window.	Click the Go Back button at the bottom of the help window.
To execute commands in an Igor help window	Select the commands and press Control-Return or Control-Enter.	Select the commands and press Ctrl+Enter.
To kill a help window	Option-click the close button.	Press Alt and click the close button.
To insert a function or operation template in a procedure window or in the command line	Type or select the name of an Igor operation or function, Control-click it, and choose Insert Template.	Type or select the name of an Igor operation or function, right-click it, and choose Insert Template.
To get help for a function or operation from a procedure, notebook or help window or from the command line	Type or select the name of an Igor operation or function, Control-click it, and choose Help For <name>.	Type or select the name of an Igor operation or function, right-click it, and choose Help For <name>.