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Subject: Re: New IDL Update Policy  
Posted by [scowen](#) on Sun, 06 Jun 1993 17:45:14 GMT  
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This whole upgrade/maintenance business with RSI is a crock.

I've just been pricing stuff for a suite of 3 DEC Alphas we're considering buying here at ASU, and have found out very interesting new pricing information that the majority of IDL users out there may not know about.

Last week most of us received letters from the kind folk at RSI indicating that it would cost us around \$450 to upgrade our DEC 5000's to v3.1 (that's the sticker price for all DEC machines because RSI says they're having problems with DEC as a vendor finding bug solutions" - why this cost has to be passed on to the customer because they're employing people who can't find the solutions themselves I don't know...) \*as well as\* the \$200 for continued maintenance which now has to be through \*one\* person per site if you want to keep the costs down. Anyway, since we're purchasing new machines I wanted to get pricing on licenses for the new architectures.

I was told that "oh, they're (licenses for the Alpha OSF/1, available now) available for the same price that licenses are now". This sounded nice until I asked for a written quote. Last year we purchased node-locked multi user licenses for \$1500 per platform. The educational price of the same licenses now is somewhere around \$7300 (\$15000 list)!!!! For our budgeted \$1500 we can only get the one node/one user license. This is getting way out of control.

RSI is now embarked upon a policy that will probably price them out of the market. We're especially annoyed here since in the last 6-12 months we have invested a lot of time and effort developing software for the IDL environment only to find that it's going to cost us major \$\$\$'s just to stay current and be able to continue using our code. Of course the obvious solution is say "screw it" and stay with our current configuration, but it prevents us from using the Alphas as IDL platforms. The quoted improvements in IDL v3.1 over v3.0 are to say the least minimal (I think "a better contouring algorithm" was the most attractive one - hardly worth that much money guys). In fact, having now used the UNIX IDL and since it does \*not\* support anything useful like dynamic linking of C code and the like, there's absolutely no way we can justify spending \$7300 to equip our platforms in the way we'd need.

This has caused, to my knowledge, many people who have been using IDL for some years now with some success to consider other options for interactive environments. Personally speaking I'm thinking about diving in to KHOROS and developing object oriented packages through that (public domain) package.

I'd be interested to hear the views of other longer term IDL users with regard to this, since in these rather tight financial times we cannot afford

to go blowing our valuable research \$\$\$'s on ill-thought pricing campaigns.

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