
Subject: Re: Computing Speed

Posted by [Joe\[1\]](#) on Wed, 18 Feb 1998 08:00:00 GMT

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Matthew Hanson wrote:

>
> Greeting all,
> I have been running IDL on a Sparc Station20 for several months. A
> couple months ago we got an Ultra 1 (167MHz, 128MB RAM) and i used
> that
> for a while for our IDL apps. Now i have a Pentium II (300MHz) with
> 128
> MB of RAM.
> Running some computationally intensive surface fitting and FFT's on
> both
> machines i have found, quite surprisingly, that the PC (running NT) is
> whuppin the SUN Station (which costs roughly 6 times the PC).
>
> (We also run a Atmospheric Fortran program - the PC runs this about 8
> times faster than the UNIX)
>
> What has been other people's experience running IDL on PC and UNIX
> based
> machines? How about Macs? Fast, slow. . . ?

I noticed the same thing when I switched from a DEC Alpha 3000/500 to a PPro 200MHz a couple of years ago. The PPro was nearly twice as fast and most IDL tests and it cost way less than the Alpha (and I could buy software for NT unlike Digital Unix). Most of the Alpha folks here have upgraded to PC's. We are now working on getting rid of Sun's and saving a few hundred thousand dollars in the process.

I noted a follow up post talking about the Unix boxes performing better under load. Well that may be true, however, I offer that the majority of computers out there sit on a desk dedicated to one user and spend the majority of their time running a screensaver. It is really hard to justify spending 3 to 10 times more (including software) for a Unix box over a PC. Mac's are another story ;)

Z

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