
Subject: Re: Memory allocation problem:

Posted by [Peter Mason](#) on Sun, 22 Feb 1998 08:00:00 GMT

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On Fri, 20 Feb 1998, I~nigo Garcia wrote:

> Well, I was afraid of something like this... I still find it a bug, whatever you
> say, they should find a way of freeing that memory !!! Can it be done with
> pointers ?? In a simple way, please, my brain is too small to fight with those
> beings.

Since version 5, IDL has been using a 3rd-party memory allocation library called "SmartHeap". (At least, I know this is true for Win95 and suspect it's true for other platforms.)

(Check out <http://www.microquill.com/> for info on SmartHeap.)

SmartHeap functions differently on different platforms, especially with "large" allocations (>64K). One would hope that a product like this would generally be able to return large allocations to the operating system, but apparently they haven't yet got this right for some operating systems.

Still, I'd say that RSI is on the right track using this stuff (mostly for other reasons). If there was an easy-to-use solution to the memory-freeing problem that some of IDL's platforms still exhibit, I'd expect it to be in a product like this, sooner or later.

I don't think that there's a way around this right now.

I admit that I haven't tried to do this kind of thing, but from what I know, if there was a solution (and it would be platform-specific) I think it would be an ugly and very risky one involving C code and a sound knowledge of IDL internals. Also, it would only address the variables you know about. IDL goes through a lot of temporary variables, and it would still handle these its own way.

Peter Mason
