## Subject: Re: IDL to C translator
Posted by davis on Thu, 09 Apr 1998 07:00:00 GMT

On Tue, 07 Apr 1998 10:28:11 -0500, Liam Gumley <Liam.Gumley@ssec.wisc.edu>
wrote:
> Just out of curiosity, why would you want to translate a working IDL
> application into C or FORTRAN?

I can think of several reasons: speed, portability, and
maintainability.

IDL is fast only when one is able to vectorize everything.
Unfortunately, this is not always possible.  For example, I once
re-wrote an IDL application in C that would not completely vectorize
and achived a factor of 20 in speed.  Of course this was more portable
because the resulting program was able to compile and run on systems
that did not have IDL.  Finally, it is more maintainable because, in
my opinion, IDL is not a good language for projects that require many
lines of code because it lacks basic support for variable
declarations, etc...  In fact, when I ported the IDL program to C,
several variable name spelling errors were uncovered because all C
requires that one declare all variables before use.

--John