
Subject: Re: IDL performance and FFTs (was: call external speed)

Posted by [stevenj](#) on Thu, 17 Sep 1998 07:00:00 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

David Kastrup <dak@mailhost.neuroinformatik.ruhr-uni-bochum.de> wrote:

> Karl Krieger <kak@ipp.mpg.de> writes:

>

>> BTW: I very much doubt if it's against the GPL to distribute code,
>> which refers to subroutine libraries under GPL as long as I do not
>> include these routines or a compiled binary.

>

> If the interface is unique to the GPL software, you are creating a
> derived work, as it is of no use without the GPL binary and is
> intended to link with it. The interface itself, however, is usually
> not considered copyrightable. So if you distribute a lousy
> implementation of fftw with the same interface along with your wrapper
> routines, one would have problems suing you in court.

That is an interesting point. Actually, you don't have to create a lousy implementation of FFTW. Versions of FFTW prior to 1.3 were not distributed under the GPL, but rather were free for non-commercial use. These versions used a subset of the current interface. So, as long as you stick to the 1.2 interfaces, I suppose you could argue that you are not creating a derived work of the GPL'ed versions. You still wouldn't be able to distribute something linked with the GPL'ed versions, though.

Cordially,
Steven G. Johnson
