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Subject: Re: RSI's Priorities (was: GUI Builder...)

Posted by [LC's No-Spam Newsread](#) on Thu, 19 Nov 1998 08:00:00 GMT

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On 16 Nov 1998, Peter Suetterlin wrote:

> Brian Jackel <jackel@danlon.physics.uwo.ca> writes:

>> There does seem to be a clear distinction between people involved in

>> 1) Research/analysis

>> 2) Development of ``production" level code

> Brian, I do wholeheartedly agree. I'm also from group 1, and really

> don't have a need for all those fancy things. Even widgets are a very

> rare thing for me....

I fully agree. Me and all my colleagues are all "group 1". Although it does not mean that we may need well written and documented code for some "repetitive" analysis.

I've been using IDL as a "scratchpad" programming environment for quick data manipulation and visualization, and also for fast development of concurrent variants of an algorithm (the final version to be coded in Fortran). Advantages for this wrt other s/w environments should be obvious.

I've \*NEVER\* used widgets myself (in IDL, all my GUI programming was HTML forms ... for the rest I'm quite keen on command line mode !) except in one instance recently, when I had to \*demonstrate\* a given look-and-feel to a colleague ... which has to do a thing in Visual Basic (external constraint) and is an absolute beginner with GUIs.

> Same for IDL, it looks like they want to make some sort of visual basic  
> out of it. Together with the prices, this makes me heavily think about  
> switching to ANA or Midas.

By "Midas" do you mean ESO/MIDAS ?

Will that be still kept alive for long ?

I agree that RSI policy is scaring many people away. We ourselves survive with a few oldish (4.0) licenses and are not interested in spending a lot of money for a so called "maintenance contract" (at the moment we are keeping alive an old workstation which was our first license manager, because it looks a waste to spend money for a maintenance contract just to be allowed to move the license file - for a perfectly legitimate license set - on a new machine).

We would definitely prefer to buy several low cost "basic IDL" licenses (and

do not have license contention "ehi you down the corridor, have you finished using IDL ?") for a frozen version.

I've seen several international astronomical projects (space and ground based) rejecting to consider IDL as their development environment ("oh yes it's quite good, but it's commercial, it costs money, and where will it go")

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