
Subject: Re: Licence question

Posted by [Craig Markwardt](#) on Sun, 01 Aug 1999 07:00:00 GMT

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

Onet <onet_nl@hotmail.com> writes:

>

> I have a question about selling IDL-scripts.

>

> I have been asked to make an application (for Win98/NT) that
> generates some data and afterwards I want to use IDL as the
> program to display this data and generate a postscript file
> (perhaps even call IDL from my program).

>

> Considering that RSI has the copyright to the IDL program and
> the IDL language (keywords, etc) used to make the scripts:

Hold on. RSI absolutely owns the copyright to the IDL program and its accessory files, but I highly doubt they own the *language* itself. Sure, they might own a copyright on a textual description of the language, (a technical white paper, etc.), but not the language. As a matter of public policy, I don't think any court would uphold any claims on ownership of a computer language in the abstract. It's gotta be tangible to be ownable.

In your case, you need to consider the copyright law. Did you copy or transcribe any portion of the IDL program into your own? If you did, well then you might have a problem. But using IDL keywords alone probably doesn't count. Just because I use the words "if", "then" and "object" in an article doesn't mean David Fanning can come after me for copyright infringement on his book. [Try me David.] All of the creativity is in the *arrangement* of those words into a meaningful program, and copyright law is all about creativity.

> - Can I sell the script that I make to my customer (the
> copyright of the script)?
> - What are RSIs restrictions on this? (I could not find this
> information, other than that the USE of the language is
> restricted but it is not clear to me what this means).

If you signed a contract with RSI that limits your options, well then that's one thing. Otherwise, I would argue that you are free to give away or sell your *original* scripts to anyone you choose. It seems the consultants who visit this newsgroup do it all the time. :-)

Craig

--

Craig B. Markwardt, Ph.D. EMAIL: craigmnet@cow.physics.wisc.edu
Astrophysics, IDL, Finance, Derivatives | Remove "net" for better response
