
Subject: Re: IDL 5.4. Neato. NOT.

Posted by [Dennis J. Boccippio](#) on Sun, 29 Oct 2000 12:01:33 GMT

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Posting from home so as to forego the possibility that _our_ ODIN vendor will lose my post. In partial response to Joseph's issue (4) below:

Q: Will 5.4's non-support of LZW (specifically, WRITE_GIF) balk at _any_ routine named 'WRITE_GIF'? It strikes me that we, in theory, should be able to replace the built-in WRITE_GIF with our own code which, e.g., calls WRITE_PNG, and then spawns a Unix process which converts the PNG to GIF using 3rd party tools, or an Applescript that calls GraphicConverter to do the same (I'm pretty sure GC is scriptable). Sorry, Windows folks, no idea how this would be done on that platform...

Anyway, if this were possible, it'd be a one-time fix (for the write routines at least, although presumably the same could be done for reading) rather than a huge amount of code retooling...

- Dennis Boccippio

(PS - can confirm that Mac GC is scriptable... I note the following entry in its AppleScript Dictionary:

save reference [in alias] as [list of types, including GIF] makeCopy
boolean

On Un*x, the 'convert' command comes along with a package that I've forgotten - ImageMagick, or libppm, or something...)

In article <gurman-AE7196.23033928102000@news.crosslink.net>, "Joseph B. Gurman" <gurman@ari.net> wrote:

> In article <39F9F19A.7912306D@ncep.noaa.gov>, Paul van Delst
> <pvandelst@ncep.noaa.gov> wrote:
>
>> p.s. FWIW, I applaud RSI for not caving and paying license fees for the
>> LZW/GIF stuff.
>
> Without any real details of the terms and conditions, I can't concur.
>
> Thanks to the Goddard news non-server, in turn thanks to our magnificent
> ODIN contractor, my original rant on this subject didn't get posted, but
> I will summarize.
>

> 1. If it doesn't require divulging company-proprietary information, we
> would all like to hear how nisy's classified IDL and how much a license
> would have cost the end user.
>
> 2. It would be really nice if Kodak/RSI management would realize that a
> fair fraction of IDL licenses are used to create Web content every day,
> and that usage is more important to those licensees than swanky, new
> programming features.
>
> 3. Aforesaid licensees will pay for additional, Web-friendly features
> such as QuickTime and yes, even GIF support. There is no reason why the
> functionalities couldn't have been offered as separately licensed
> products, as the wavelet kit is, no matter how expensive (the wavelet
> kit certainly isn't cheap). That way, those who need them could decide
> --- rather than Kodak --- whether to pay for them or not.
>
> 4. Some of those licensees have hundreds of modules that read and write
> GIFs. Is it worth changing them all? Without knowledge of the Unisys/RSI
> negotiations, we can't really tell.
>
> 5. This is such a major issue for us that we will be in no hurry to
> upgrade to 5.4, and as a result, probably no hurry to purchase software
> maintenance. IMHO, this means a loss of revenue stream for Kodak/RSI.
> How big a loss, I can't tell. We have ~ 20 licenses.
>
> 6. All of the above is said without regard to the superiority of PNG
> and/or any other graphic interchange format (real or supposed) over GIF,
> merely on the basis of investment in existing code and the
> Web-accessing world's level of comfort with GIFs.
>
> Any software vendor that abandons its user base on a major item such
> as this can't expect loyalty. Given David Stern's personal relationship
> with many of his longstanding customers, RSI is going to have a hard
> time convincing me that this issue isn't what prompted David to sell to
> Kodak.

> Joe Gurman
