
Subject: IDL 5.4. Neato. NOT.

Posted by [Joseph B. Gurman](#) on Sun, 29 Oct 2000 03:03:39 GMT

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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 nisys classified IDL and how much a luicense
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 mor eimportant 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 obn 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
