
Subject: Re: It costs how much?!?!?

Posted by [Randall Skelton](#) on Mon, 04 Dec 2000 08:00:00 GMT

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Bill's message seems points to a growing trend which RSI had best be concerned about-- IDL is not the only programming tool available these days: Wavemetrics IGOR, Mathworks MATLAB, and a few others are all gaining ground and cost a fraction of what RSI charges for IDL!

If I didn't have access to a department site license for IDL I'd never have begun using it. As a grad student myself I am all for RSI reducing the cost of single licenses to students! I own a laptop which I take with me on 'vacations' and field experiments and it is frustrating not to be able to 'show off' my IDL plots at conferences or simply display my results on the road. Forget about the 'crippled version' though, I develop both in C and IDL and it is essential that I can use both of these tools together on my desktop computer and my laptop.

I know people have been promoting the use of Matlab around my department as well. By coincidence, I contacted the Mathworks sales department about a single license for my laptop... Simply put: I need to be able to plot results in the field and the cost of IDL is prohibitive. I contacted RSI also and I've been told there will be an announcement early in the new year regarding OS support and pricing. I'll give them until the end of February.

One last thought:

Does anyone use GKS anymore? (GKS = 'Graphic Kernel Systems' which was widely used at NASA and other atmospheric research labs for visualization about 5-10 years ago). They had an equally nasty software license which cost about the same as IDL and was node-locked, single-machine, os-dependent, etc. Could this be the fate of IDL?

I wonder if there are any people from RSI-Kodak who are reading this newsgroup?

Randall

>> One final note, to those who commented about RSI not being interested in
>> marketing or selling to graduate students... That is a very poor
>> marketing practice! People are creatures of habit. If you get all of
>> the physics graduate students using IDL, then you will have 90% of them
>> going out to industry and purchasing IDL. On the contrary, why on earth
>> would I go out and buy IDL in my new job if I had never used it and
>> wasn't familiar with it? We have a matlab licesnse available at school
>> and I have switched to it... the license is much more flexible and the
>> people at MathWorks are quite keen to have graduate students using thier

>> products (i.e. personal use student licenses of non-crippled software
>> are not \$1000 CDN).
>
> Oh man, have I seen that before. Back where I used to work, every student workstation had
> Matlab on it and now some of those students are working there. And guess what they use?
> Unfortunately, Matlab has become more of a crutch than a tool for building/prototyping
> production software. Oh well. (That's not to say the same thing couldn't happen with
> non-judicious use of IDL).
>
> It seems - to me at least - that the licensing terms for IDL site licenses change often
> enough to elicit sighs of frustration from those who oversee them. The TC (tech
> computing) people back at the old job are now encouraging people to switch to (or start
> with) Matlab because they've had jack of dealing with IDL licensing (e.g. I asked if my
> laptop IDL 5.4 license was available and was asked "When you going to change to Matlab.
> It seems to be all the rage." and then told "We just ordered a pretty good package for
> matlab. We were able to purchase a department license, and a group of offsite licenses.")
> It seems Mathworks provides more flexible alternatives that allows the TC crowd to do TC
> stuff rather than chase around who's got what license and is it covered under this or that
> site agreement.
>
> Sheesh.
>
> Morning winge over. Sorry. Off for coffee.....
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> paulv
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