David Fanning wrote:

I am sympathetic. I really am. I especially

> dislike the cheesy way this whole decision
> was announced. It denotes a lack of...well,
> respect...for the people who really do pay
> the bills it seems to me.

What I fear is that Kodak management either doesn't care about, or worse, would _rather_ see the demise of IDL and RSI in general. Perhaps someone wants to gut the company and scoop the product.

> But given all that, I don't think this decision
> will be changed. I don't know the leadership at RSI,
> or anything about them, but I don't expect them
> to change their mind for this reason.

From what I see, the financial excuse is uttery uncompelling. This is good if is indeed the real reason. There is at least the possibility of convincing them the picture is not as dim as they (badly) modeled. If however the finacial excuse is just a smokescreen for a political decision ("kill cross platform because we're going to windows" or some such) then I agree we're all just spitting in the wind. If it is the latter, RSI will lose a whole lot of reputation on top of business.

> The Mac right now, today, is not a serious
> scientific computing platform. I know, I know.
> MacOSX is going to change all that, etc., etc.
> But I don't believe it. And I doubt the folks
> making this decision at RSI believe it.

As others have posted, I would disagree. Our section of APL is ~20% Mac. The planetary group is 40-50%. But heck, even 10% is nothing to sneeze at in the land of slim margins. Most mac users wouldn't even consider switching hardware platforms for the likes of a fickle software product. I think it's pretty awful timing to make such a summary judgement when the next year or so will reveal
the true answer.

> Many of us using Windows today were once Mac users.
> Why did we switch? I switched, because practically
> everyone I knew was using a PC. And because the
> software I wanted to use ran better on a PC than
> it did (if it was available) on a Mac.

I switched for the same reasons 5 years ago. Then I switched _back_ because of the G4 and OS X. Even
with the slowness of some major apps to convert I'm _much_ happier. But that's just one story.

> Is that going
> to change in the next year? The next two years? I
> seriously doubt it.

Already has changed, IMO.

> RSI is recognizing a trend that
> has been going on for a long time. The Mac may be
> the cat's meow in desktop publishing, but it is
> never going to capture enough scientific computing
> market share to drive software development on that
> platform. That is an economic prediction, not
> an indictment of the Mac's number crunching
> capabilities.

Only time will tell - not much time mind you,whic his why RSI's rationale rings so hollow.

> And I am sorry to see the whole "Alternatives
> to IDL" thread appear again. We hashed this whole
> thing over several months ago. Yes, there are
> alternatives to IDL. But let's be honest, most
> of them suck in one way or the other. None of
> them, *none* of them, are going to capture more
> than an extremely small fraction of IDL users.

Depends how many real hackers and crunchers move from IDL to a new suitor and bring their talents
with them.

> I really hate to be cynical on a newsgroup I
> love so much, but I don't believe the majority
> of the people beating their chests now will really
> leave IDL.

Maybe, maybe not. I'm certainly going to look, which I wouldn't have been doing before. _And_ I'm not going to be saying "IDL is the coolest" to anyone anymore. Intangibles both, but good for RSI? Nope.

> Too many colleagues, too much invested,
> too easy to buy a new Dell machine and carry on.

It will be possible, if not easy, to take a C++ course and translate most of what I do. Don't want to do it, but I will if I have to (probably would make me a better programmer in the end). I won't buy a new winbox just to run IDL, or _any_ program, for that matter. Not even after 10 years

writing sloppy IDL code (one of the reasons I like it is that it is so forgiving to my amateurish coding).

> And you will end up needing the new feature IDL
> has added that is not available in whatever the
> alternative de jour is that you decided to use
> as a protest.

Such is life. That's why it's good to have codewarrior friends.

> ... But in the end, you have
> to realize that this is how things are in the
> real world. We don't always like it, I'll grant
> you that. But sometimes we have to accept it.
> Sometimes that is the best alternative of all.

I dunno. If I were you, or another "mainstream" platform IDL user, I'd really consisder that if 1 salary and associated resources is considered an unrecoverable expense to RSI/Kodak, What else is
too expensive to upgrade/maintain?

> P.S. I just saw that sales of Eastman Kodak were
> 3.5 billion last quarter. Do you really think a loss
> of a couple hundred thousand dollars of revenue from
> disgruntled customers matters to them?

It should. The PR they get for having their name associated with high profile researchis worth more
than that. The reputation damage for ditching loyal users is also worth more than that. Some of the
most disgruntled, who based major hardware purchases on the promise of IDL for OS X, are no doubt
considering legal action.Regardless of how sucessful or frivolous they might be, that too is worth more than a couple hundred thou. A hundred though here, a hundred thou there, soon you're talking
serious money.

Noam