
Subject: Re: Mac OSX

Posted by [Randall Skelton](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2001 06:01:17 GMT

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It is probably in poor taste to answer my own post but here goes...

> On Wed, 10 Oct 2001, David Fanning wrote:

>

>>> Are they an alternative?

>> No.

>

> The R data language looks promising.

> <http://www.r-project.org/>

I just downloaded a carbonized version of the R data language and I must admit that I'm rather impressed. The syntax seems a little difficult to wrap my head around (statisticians/mathematicians wrote the language) but the capabilities are there and the extendability exists. It is, like IDL, a programming/scripting language model which can be extended with C/Fortran.

Supported platforms include:

Mac OS 9.x, OS X (binary/source carbonized)

Windows 9x/NT/2000 (binary/source)

Linux/Unix (source)

This seems to already cover more platforms than IDL these days and it is all free under the GNU license.

The FAQ is available at: <http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/gpl.html>.

With regard to David's last comments:

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

Call me fickle (and rather stubborn) but I'd rather only lose a years work of coding on my PhD than risk losing 2 or 3 when RSI decides that AIX, SGI, Solaris or Linux aren't profitable. I have beat 'my chest', sent my letters and spread the news of RSI's decision to every IDL user I know. I don't honestly expect RSI to change its mind on this but I certainly am

not going to buy a bunch of windows PCs just for the privilege of running IDL at \$1500 for each academic license. I nevertheless agree that others (with a code base of a decade) have a difficult choice to make.

Randall
