
Subject: Re: Mac OSX

Posted by [John Boccio](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2001 03:19:40 GMT

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In article <MPG.162e8aaf5237957a989700@news.frii.com>, David Fanning
<david@dfanning.com> wrote:

> Randall Skelton (rhskelto@atm.ox.ac.uk) writes:

>

>> There are alternatives. I'll admit that none of them can compete with the
>> wide cross-platform support that IDL has enjoyed over the years but it
>> looks like RSI's cross-platform marketing approach has vanished.

>

> Gentlemen,

>

> 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.

>

> And from what I hear at least half the folks
> at RSI are sympathetic. I don't think this was
> a unanimous decision, not by a long shot. But
> I don't think scientists are running the company
> anymore. And I don't think the people who made
> the decision really stopped to consider the--for
> lack of a better word--cultural significance of a
> decision like this.

>

> Quite frankly, losing a platform like the Mac matters
> to a lot of us, whether we use a Macintosh or not.

>

> 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.

>

> The Mac right now, today, is not a serious
> scientific computing platform.

This is a load of utter garbage!!!!

We are entirely a Mac shop

Physics and Astronomy, Chemistry, Biolgy
at Swarthmore College.

We use Macs for both the curriculum and all of our research programs (a total of 31 different programs).

We also use Macs in an Apple Seed parallel cluster (20 machines) to do parallel computing calculations on plasmas, galaxy-galaxy collisions and positrons in solids.

- > 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.

All of the above works better under UNIX ---> MacOS X, which now has the largest installed UNIX base

- > Not when
- > perfectly good systems can be had for no more than
- > \$3000.

So what. The price difference are no longer that dramatic.

- >
- > 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.

We find the opposite is true.

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

Why?

- > 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.

I think you and Kodak are wrong about this.

- > That is an economic prediction, not
- > an indictment of the Mac's number crunching

> capabilities.
>
> 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.

Maybe we will now come up with something that is better.
Will make sure it only runs on MacOS X.

>
> 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.

No you don't.

> 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.

The easy way is not always the best!

>
> Yes, send your letters and e-mail. Yes, make
> your feelings about this decision known to the
> people who made it. Maybe it will cause them
> to consider more carefully the next time they
> make a decision like this. Yes, explore alternatives
> to IDL, if you must. 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.

Give us all a break!

>
> Sadly,
>
> David
>
> 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? This is just
> the price *we* pay for a corporate culture.
