Subject: RSI, Mac and Tru64
Posted by viggohan on Fri, 26 Oct 2001 20:23:35 GMT
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After writing a quite irate letter to RSI bemoaning the loss of support for Mac OS X (native mode) and Alpha Tru64 RSI sent us a representative at the beginning of last week. A short report for your enjoyment:

Well, then ITA's meeting with RSI's representative is just concluded (actually the meeting was on Monday, my how time flies when one is having fun). I thought I would send a little report on my impressions from the meeting (if you're not interested, sorry, please delete).

Unfortunately, and though RSI's representative was very professional and sympathetic to our plight, I came out of the meeting more pessimistic than when I went in: In short, the impression I got was that RSI does not see us (the space science community) as an "interesting" source of income anymore.

Their reaction to this is to get out of the market as quickly as possible, "the large number of platforms we support is a now a millstone" (actual quote) and to concentrate on the "core" market, which I understood to be Windows, Intel Linux, and Solaris. I assume this is what is used in the medical community or some such, I personally have never seen IDL running

It seems that RSI's decision was taken very suddenly, the European offices were actively flogging Mac licenses up to a few days before the announcement, much to their spokepersons embarrassment. The impression came through that the decision was made under severe financial pressure and that it was made in haste.

On the Mac front we heard the X11 tale ("perhaps it would have been better if we had come with this possibility before our announcement of discontinuing support." Quite). On the Tru64 front we received no help: "I will speak your concerns, but frankly, unless you can put money on the table (as AIX has done) this will not help".

What to do? I would like to hear your thoughts on the following dilemma: We have an investment of ca. 2-3M$ in Alpha workstations, servers and clusters. This is not going to be replaced anytime soon by "RSI core" platforms. We have been running IDL since 1985 and now have 50 floating licenses. We are in charge of writing the QL software for one of the Solar B instruments and have been asked to do the same for Solar Orbiter, for Sunrise and perhaps for a few others. We were, of course, planning on using IDL for these. But. By the time Solar B is launched IDL will have reached version 7.2 or whatever - we cannot develop the QL on a frozen platform starting now. Buying a couple of Linux boxes is possible, but

then the spinoff in writing the software to our institution is moot, and anyway I strongly feel that QL software should be as universal as possible. What do you guys at NASA think about these type of questions?

Perhaps we should go for Java? (On the other hand, this is another system Bill Gates is doing his damndest to kill...)

There is a Solar B software meeting in January on Hawaii were the instrument teams will discuss how to proceed....

Arrrrg, best wishes for a good weekend, I personally am reaching for the Aquavit bottle as I write

Viggo.

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Viggo Hansteen
Institute of theoretical astrophysics
University of Oslo
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