
Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [Dennis Boccippio](#) on Thu, 25 Oct 2001 15:55:21 GMT
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In article <3BD826E9.F60CB501@bigelow.org>,
Ben Tupper <btupper@bigelow.org> wrote:

> JD
>
> Thanks for assembling this comparison. This is the kind of meat-and-potatoes
> information I have been lacking. The numerical performance issue is a
> weighty
> one; that's not to diminish the importance of the native interface and
> display
> speed/rendering. I don't want to ask you to compare apples and oranges, but
> (I
> will anyway) how do you think the numerical performance of a Unix port of IDL
> to
> OS X will compare to that we currently see in IDL on the G4 under OS 9? When
> we
> switched from Unix IDL to Mac, I was blown away by the performance
> increase...
> will I be blown 'back' to the slower performance?
>
> Ben
>

Numerical performance aside, from the 'beggars can't be choosers' front,
compare the following:

```
+=====+
large jobs monopolize CPU
-----
  OS-9: almost entirely (despite decent RSI and MacOS progress)
  OS-X: almost negligibly
+=====+

+=====+
CLI/shells allow efficient management/preprocessing of data files
-----
  OS-9: difficult (Applescript or 3rd party shell tools required)
  OS-X: trivial (and flexible) Un*x
+=====+
```

These two issues alone are the reason my MacOS license is used only for
short/interactive jobs and code development, while my meaty jobs are run
on IRIX licenses. They have nothing to do with OS-X nativization of the

IDL code itself.

The short form: what I *want* is:

- The ability to store, manage and preprocess many large data files *inexpensively* on one machine. OS-X/shells with banks of Firewire drives give me this.
(other Un*x solutions give me shells but storage and maintenance are expensive, Linux aside)
- The ability to develop analysis code efficiently and comfortably. IDL/OS-X with the DE and profiler give me this.
(any IDL platform gives me this)
- The ability to batch process these data files without dragging the machine to a halt. IDL/OS-X gives me this.
(any IDL platform but OS-9 gives me this. [Windoze?])
- The ability to postprocess the results for visualization and sharing efficiently on the same machine. (For me, Noesis, Quicktime, MediaCleaner, Acrobat and/or <gasp> even iMovie/iDVD give me this)
(no other platform gives me this functionality the way I want it)
- The ability to create presentations, slides, papers, multimedia demos, etc on the same machine using the tools I want (Director, Powerpoint, TeX, Acrobat, Illustrator, etc.)
(Windoze could give me this, I guess.)
- The ability to serve out results from the same machine using standard/ "safe" tools (like Apache) and access them from home (like ssh)
(any Un*x solution could give me this)

Yes, I know, I can (and do) do all this by using multiple platforms. I can even do some of this less effectively using a variety of shareware or GNU tools on one platform (appease the Linux folks). I've tried that option and it always comes up short; the tools just aren't up to snuff compared with commercial solutions in the Mac/Windoze world. None of my needs (not necessarily representative, granted) require significant G4/OS-X/Aqua nativization of IDL. Would it be nice, yes, but critical, no. YMMV. I'm almost certain that any cost or productivity losses incurrent by non-G4-optimized or non-Aquafied OS-X/IDL would be more than offset by consolidating my current multi-platform approach to a single-platform solution...

- Dennis Boccippio, NASA/MSFC SD-60
