
Subject: Re: gif license

Posted by nobody@nowhere.com (S on Thu, 01 Nov 2001 16:25:46 GMT

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On Wed, 31 Oct 2001 21:46:01 -0500, Dennis Boccippio <djboccip@hotmail.com> wrote:

> In article <slrn9u07p6.cht.nobody@pooh.nrel.gov>,
> nobody@nowhere.com (Steve Smith<steven_smith>) wrote:
>
>
>>
>> I am wondering the following: since IDL is an interpretive language, i.e. you
>> cannot make standalone programs, then any potential user of code you may give
>> out would have an IDL license, and presumably would not have the GIF/LZW
>> enabled if they had not contacted Unisys and secured a license. So where is
>> the problem? It would seem to me that your code would be useless to anyone
>> without this license, am I correct? So I don't see how distributing your code
>> is a problem (you are NOT distributing the ability to read/write GIF).
>
>
> Seems logical; the portions of the apps with GIF export functionality
> would be useless, although I'm not sure that would immunize us against
> some hypothetical Unisys action, given the language of the agreement.
> Actually, that raises a question - we haven't yet upgraded from 5.3
> (because of the GIF issue and legacy code). How does 5.4+ IDL handle
> READ_GIF/WRITE_GIF? Do they fail to compile? Or simply perform
> nothing unless activated?
>
> Personally, I'm torn on the LZW issue. On one hand, I think it's
> perfectly reasonable to protect intellectual property, on the other
> hand, I'm still peeved over U's handling of the issue several years
> back, which smacked of a bait-and-switch, and doesn't seem corporate
> behavior worth rewarding...
>
> - DJB
>

Maybe you know something I don't, but I recently posted a link to an article about the history of the LZW/GIF issue. From that article, I gathered that LZW was used by many (like Compuserve) without permission and that Unisys was either oblivious or didn't care about it till some time later. It doesn't sound like it was an intentional act aimed at proliferating LZW by giving it away. I think what's really disturbing is that in the present situation, nobody knows if what they are doing is legal until they've had a long consultation with Unisys and secured a license.

--

Steve S.

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remove NOSPAM before replying
