
Subject: Research Systems Platform Support Update
Posted by [Matthew Powell](#) on Mon, 03 Dec 2001 17:40:13 GMT
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In response to customer requests for continued support of Mac OS X, IBM AIX and Compaq Tru64 Unix for Alpha platforms, Research Systems Inc. (RSI) announced today that it will reverse an earlier decision to drop support for these three platforms in future releases of IDL and ENVI. We have heard from our customers regarding the importance of these platforms to their work and have adjusted our plans accordingly, stated Richard Cooke, Vice President of Engineering for Research Systems. We intend to work closely with the customer base to better understand their future platform plans so that we can make informed decisions about which platforms can be supported profitably. RSI plans to take specific steps with its licensing tools to more accurately capture the platform mix of its customers in support of these future decisions and a platform survey will be sent out to all RSI customers requesting information on their current and future platform usage.

Both AIX and Tru64 were supported in the recent IDL 5.5 and ENVI 3.5 releases. For customers who received updates recently, no further action on their part is required other than to remain current on their maintenance to ensure that they will receive the updates for the next releases of each of these products. RSI will also be modestly adjusting maintenance and new license pricing for these platforms in order to cover the costs of supporting them. Details of these pricing changes will be forthcoming. The decision to continue support of the Compaq Tru64 Unix for Alpha platform does not apply to the new Intel IA-64 (Itanium) platform currently being developed by Compaq. RSI has not yet made a decision regarding support of this platform. Continued support for AIX and Tru64 has been made possible through the assistance of IBM and Compaq.

For the Macintosh OS X platform, RSI will be providing a native release using Tenon Intersystems' Xtools X-Windows server, giving customers the benefit of OS X's Unix core while providing a Motif interface similar to that provided on other Unix platforms. This essentially allows RSI to support Mac OS X as another Unix platform, thus reducing the costs of development and support. Xtools is an easy-to-use Mac OS X application that lets scientists and engineers display X-Windows and Motif Windows on the Aqua desktop.

We're very pleased that Xtools is facilitating the port of these key and very popular applications to Mac OS X, comments Anita Holmgren, Tenon's President. We developed Xtools precisely with this purpose in mind.

For IDL customers, this solution provides a fully native version of IDL

to the Macintosh user, including IDL's existing Velocity Engine optimizations and multi-threading support, as well as support for most of the advantages of the Macintosh OS X hardware and software platform. RSI plans to provide a special pre-release of IDL for Mac OS X to customers in Q1, 2002, and officially release the final version based on customer feedback from the pre-release. An ENVI release for Mac OS X will follow shortly thereafter. A more firm date for ENVI will be provided after the first release period for IDL.

With the implementation of this plan to move forward with a Mac OS X release for the Macintosh platform, IDL 5.5 will mark the last release to support Mac OS 8 and OS 9. For those RSI customers using the Mac platform who will not be migrating to Mac OS X, RSI will continue to sell the OS 8 and 9 release versions of IDL 5.5, but will not be releasing future versions of IDL or ENVI for these operating systems. Furthermore, as with AIX and Tru64, there will be a corresponding modest increase in maintenance and new license prices for the Macintosh platform in order to cover the associated development and support costs.

Research Systems is committed to supporting our customers with their varied platform requirements while maintaining financially sound business practices. Our goal is to communicate all pertinent information to our customers in a timely fashion in order to allow them ample time to make well informed platform decisions. Accordingly, we would like to reassure our customers on other currently supported platforms that we have no plans to discontinue any of them at this time. We ask customers for assistance in planning for the future by informing their sales representatives about their future platform purchase plans so that we can better support our customer base. We also ask that our customers take a moment to complete and return a brief survey that will be e-mailed to them shortly regarding their current platform usage and future purchase plans.
