
Subject: Re: Object graphics on Windows
Posted by [JD Smith](#) on Thu, 12 Jun 2003 16:47:56 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

On Thu, 12 Jun 2003 09:20:30 -0700, James Kuyper wrote:

> Paul van Delst wrote:
> ...
>> Isn't there a difference between the "open source linux" (whatever that
>> means) and the stuff that's distributed from companys like Red Hat and
>> Co.? (I don't know since I also will freely admit that I don't know
>> what I'm talking about :o)
>
> Yes and no. RedHat packages up Linux, and adds some "value added" to
> justify charging you a price for it, but it's basically the same thing
> you could download for free if you have a very fast modem or lots of
> time to spare.

Despite the oft-misinformed outlook of Windows users, who have been hardened by enduring years of incompatible OS upgrades, the various different linux distributions are actually, for the most part, just different flavors of exactly the same thing, diverging most notably in GUI themes and control tools. Most programs depend on the underlying distribution primarily through shared libraries, with perhaps a weak dependency on a shell for install scripts. Sometimes these dependencies are very complex, and thus a program can seem tied to individual distributions (RedHat 7.x, say). In reality, it's just tied to a specific (large) combination of shared libraries.

The key point here is that IDL doesn't actually depend in the least on all those RedHat extras; in fact it's fairly self-sufficient (bundling it's own Mesa OpenGL library, for instance). It's dependencies are limited to the C library (glibc), C++ library (libstdc++) and several X11 libraries. So really, RSI could simply specify a range of glibc, libstdc++, and XFree86 versions, and be confident that *any* distribution with compatible versions will work. This is the standard practice in the open-source world, but I suppose there's fear of confusing the potential buyer.

JD
