Subject: Re: IDL 4.0 Update Preview (forward for those w
Posted by tribbey on Fri, 03 Mar 1995 14:19:09 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

In article <3j7329$e5a@reznor.larc.nasa.gov>, zawodny@arbd0.larc.nasa.gov (Joseph M
Zawodny) writes:
|> In article <gurman-0203950142100001@barkochba.gsfc.nasa.gov>
gurman@uvsp.gsfc.nasa.gov (Joseph B. Gurman) writes:
|> >
|> >   I also believe the new maintenance policy is keyed to the original
|> >license price, so it will become much more expensive to maintain
|> >node-locked licenses. That is a shame (IMHO), because the license manager
|> >is such a pain.
|> >
|> >   Anyone have any opinions on the matter?
|> >
|>
|> We jumped ship on the node locked licenses a few years back when they
|> first came out. It was pretty painless even on our systems (Alphas
|> running OSF/1) despite having to use the newly ported license manager
|> daemon. All in all, I'd have to say that it was much easier than
|> expected. We were also able to consolidate several of our node locked
|> licenses in to a single multi-license network version and thus able to
|> save a bit on annual maint. I am not sure whether this is still a
|> standard practice, as this was done before they hired a "business
|> manager". Since then a number of questionable business decisions have
|> been made.
|>
|> IMHO, RSI is going the wrong way on this. They need to hold the line
|> on maint costs and drop the price of IDL to be more in line with the
|> competition (like PV-WAVE, Hi-Q, Matlab, ...). These are all running
|> at about half the cost of IDL. Market share and size of total market
|> are the key to stable profits. I have no doubt IDL would do well in
|> head to head competition against these other packages, but at twice
|> the cost they price themselves in to another league (and out of the
|> competition). The cost vs units-sold function is not a smooth curve
|> rather it has a number of discontinuities in it. Finding a local
|> maximum in cost*units-sold does not assure one of having found the
|> global max.
|>
|> ... but I ramble.
|>
|>
|> --
|> Joseph M. Zawodny   (KO4LW)   NASA Langley Research Center
|> Internet: j.m.zawodny@larc.nasa.gov   MS-475, Hampton VA, 23681-0001
|> TCP/IP: ko4lw@ko4lw.ampr.org   Packet: ko4lw@n4hog.va.usa.na

I think I have to agree. I started using PV-WAVE in 1989 and soon after that started using IDL. This is a time span of 5-6 years, tops. In that time it seems that RSI has gone from a very grassroots company to something that I would call 'typically corporate'. Granted, prices almost invariably go up and not down, but in these past 5 years things have changed rapidly and, IMHO, seemingly erratic at times.

There was a time when IDL offered features that were not available from the above mentioned competition. But other than maybe the FFT routines in IDL, the gap between IDL and its competition
has become very narrow. I have heard of a STUDENT edition of IDL priced at ~$200! That's gonna be
hard to sell when an educational copy of MATLAB or Mathematica or MAPLE can be had for a lot less.
In todays corporate and academic climates, it may, IMHO, become very difficult to woo potential customers
when budgets are tight and there are more economically feasible alternatives available.

It would seem, IMHO, that the corporate focus at RSI has moved from being an enabler of science to
begin just another software company trying to sell a product. I think that if you have a good product,
have it priced right, then you don't need a lot of overhead to get people to buy it, use it, and sell others
on it.

 ... But I ramble, too.

Will Tribbey
Biomedical Imaging Center
University of Tennessee Medical Center at Knoxville
tribbey@scanner.hosp.utk.edu