
Subject: Re: RSI Red Hat Linux Info

Posted by [JD Smith](#) on Wed, 03 Dec 2003 21:58:44 GMT

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On Tue, 02 Dec 2003 11:43:58 -0700, RSI Information wrote:

- > Red Hat's recent announcement that they are discontinuing their free
- > Linux distributions has prompted questions and speculation over the
- > impact this will have on IDL, and which Linux distributions RSI will
- > support in the future. We hope you will find the following FAQ
- > (Frequently Asked Questions) helpful:
- >
- > <http://www.rsinc.com/services/techtip.asp?ttid=3618>
- >
- > Knowing where you are headed with Linux will help us to be ready and
- > waiting when you get there. Please share your plans with us regarding
- > future Linux use by filling out our online survey:
- >
- > <http://www.rsinc.com/survey/index.asp?wid=763369&sid=73>

This FAQ lists the points of exposure for IDL to the underlying OS, which included the C library, the compiler, the kernel version, and presumably all the tools used in the rsi/idl/bin/ shell scripts.

In decreasing order of importance, these are:

1. C library: This is a big dependency for most packages, so care is usually taken to prevent egregious breakage. Witness IDL6.0 binary compatibility with RH 7.1,7.2,...,8.0,9.0.
2. gcc: Aside from compiling IDL, the compiler is used only for MAKE_DLL, which is not guaranteed to work without further setup anyway. Not a big point of exposure.
3. kernel: Shared memory and vagaries of memory management might be indicated, but these features already vary from system to system far more than they do from kernel version to kernel version, and the documentation warns about these variances already.
4. /bin/sh and other tools: These have been stable for a long time, and, with care, shell scripts which have next to no system dependence can be written. It's quite likely the scripts are already completely system-independent, since they've had to work with so many flavors of Unix over the years.

Since it's relatively easy to check what version of these 4 categories are present (with #4 being hardest to check, but really a non-issue),

I still think RSI could, without actually installing and testing every Linux distribution, compose a list indicating which distributions/versions satisfy these basic conditions -- i.e. a "should work, but tell us if it doesn't" category.

JD
