
Subject: Re: Linux Question

Posted by [Michael Wallace](#) on Thu, 17 Feb 2005 04:22:01 GMT

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- > I feel that someone needs to stand up here and offer a valiant defense
- > of the astrophysics community, but I fear it's too late and we've
- > all already been irrevocably branded as hopeless luddites. :-)

- > but I hope you don't fault me for wanting to get the most
- > science done in IDL as possible with the minimum amount of screwing
- > around with configuration parameters or learning language esoterica!
- > (Same reason why I, and nearly every other astronomer I know, have
- > switched to Macs as much as possible: minimal need to screw around for
- > hours just to get things working!)

I work in the space sciences community, so I know exactly what you're talking about. A number of my scientists use Macs for the reason you mention. It seems the younger scientists (ones young enough to have grown up with computers around) are much easier to teach and much more accepting of instruction. They actually want to know a little of how to do their own IDL magic. Many of our young scientists use IDL and know some things better than I do, not that I have any great expansive IDL knowledge. The older scientists (ones who were already through a lot before the personal computer became the norm) fall in the "hopeless luddites" category. It'd take a miracle for them to upgrade from FORTRAN 77 to FORTRAN 90. At least since they're so senior they don't bug me too much -- they have their postdocs bug me. :-)

-Mike
