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Subject: Re : Q: Who knows IDL ?

Posted by [wally](#) on Wed, 17 May 1995 07:00:00 GMT

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sterner@tesla.jhuapl.edu writes

Loops are no problem if you can do enough processing each time through a loop. Before starting a major project some time ago we were trying to decide what language to use, C or IDL. Some C software existed to do a needed job and I was challenged to do the same job in IDL. I wanted to use IDL and was told that if the processing time was within a factor of 2 or so then IDL could be used. The C code was by a good C programmer. Unexpectedly my IDL software was about twice as fast as the C. Some excuse was offered (can't remember exactly what it was) but I pointed out that the excuse would not have been mentioned if the C code had been faster. Development time is much faster with IDL. I have done both FORTRAN and C in the past but have no real need for them any longer (I know some applications do require them).

It's nice to know that a well written IDL program can be faster than the corresponding C program, but on the projects I've been on speed wasn't the most important concern. Getting the system developed and debugged was always the biggest problem. In that area, IDL really excels though systems like Turbo C for the PC are terrific for development and debugging also. IMHO the real challenge with IDL is creating maintainable code.

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