Haje Korth wrote:
> I don't get the point: Why use GDL if you already have a licensed copy of
> IDL. I see GDL as an alternative solutions for people who cannot cough up
> the $$$ for the in my opinion overprized IDL license fees.

Exactly. :)

This includes people who have a valid license now which is bound to
expire at some point in the near future; people who are about to change
employers and aren't sure the new employer is going to cough up the
dough for IDL; and people who have no chance of being able to afford a
license privately for themselves but would like to tinker with data at
home. And even people who are tired of having to convince their IT
people that they should pay money every couple years to renew their IDL
license "when you can do all this in PAW"...

> PS: You could ask a lawyer to check into that for you, but they are
> overprized too and the IDL license may seem cheap compared to your legal
> fees.

I'm not really under the impression that lawyers understand the online
intellectual property jungle any better than laymen.

At this point I wasn't really looking for an expensive certifiable
answer anyways - I was trying to get a bit of a reading on how real
people feel about these things.

A linear fit, for example, is something I've written back on my
Atari-800: it's not exactly a patentable algorithm. NR published a
fortran version of the algorithm. RSI implemented it in IDL, cited NR
in the header as a source and then slapped the following two lines on
it:

; Copyright (c) 1994-2001, Research Systems, Inc. All rights reserved.
;   Unauthorized reproduction prohibited.

But what does that really mean? I can't hand this to someone else?
Can't make it public? Can't copy it to a subdirectory of my own to use
in GDL? What's actually covered under "fair use" these days?

As long as nobody looks at my harddisk, obviously there's no problem
here anywhere. But lets say I tinker with GDL and write some kind of

groundbreaking stock-trading software or some kind of super-accurate prediction code for earthquakes -- something that makes me rich enough to become a worthy target for litigation and famous enough for all the litigators to know that I exist. At that point I'd rather not have RSI thugs kick down my door and demand all my money because I did my linear fits with a routine that had their copyright in the header.

And if I then say "I was using a licensed copy of IDL on my employer's computer", my employer is going to demand my money instead.

But if I were to implement my linear fit by myself from scratch, it would look very much like RSI's, of course. Especially now that I've seen their code. How many different ways are there, really, to do this?

Then again, maybe there's no problem with the library code as long as I didn't use their actual IDL binary(?)

Ah, the vagaries of writing code in the 21st century...

cordially

Y.T.

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Remove YourClothes before you email me.

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