Subject: Mac Clusters & IDL

Posted by Trae on Sat, 12 May 2007 14:57:35 GMT

First the setup:

I do a lot of numerical simulation and image rendering in IDL. This
is amazingly CPU intensive and I've been using the new parallel
processing capabilities of IDL with good success. (It might not be
the most efficient, but man is it easy!)

We are running a mostly Mac shop and my boss just bought me the nice,
new 3GHZ two Quad Core bad boy. We will probably be buying more
computers in the near future and I'm being asked for advice on what to
buy to expand our capabilities to do numerical simulations.

Now the question.

I've been reading a lot of material about clustering Macs, and it
seems relatively "easy" especially if you buy some additional
software. I would like to use the Macs in our group to form a cluster
and buy some new Macs with the Quad Core to give the cluster some
umph.

I was wondering if anyone on this list has used IDL on a Mac cluster?
Specifically, a Pooch cluster? There are some good threads on other
forms of clusters. Mac clusters seem easy to make but expensive.
Linux clusters seem to be cheaper hardware wise but harder to keep
running.   I am a grad student, so I'm not going to get paid for the
work I'm about to do, and want to keep the work invovled in making and
maintaining a cluster to a minimum. I wanted to know if anyone on this
list had any ideas about the effort to pay-off ratios for setting up a
Mac cluster? How well does the native IDL multi-threading work on a
Mac cluster? Has anyone used IDL_IDLBridge on such a cluster?

Thanks,
-Trae