
Subject: Re: Mac Clusters & IDL

Posted by [Brian Larsen](#) on Wed, 23 May 2007 20:57:06 GMT

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Trae,

as another former grad student I would recommend more long walks (preferably with your wife) while you let the code run on a single machine. Any setup you do on computers is a huge one time investment with little payoff for you unless you are planing on sticking around MSU for long enough to make up for the investment. I think the formula is pretty simple

$$\frac{[(\text{decrease in run time}) * (\text{number of times you run it})]}{[(\text{time required to setup and maintain the system}) + (\text{time spent recoding})]}$$

The number on the bottom is large and according to Murphy always comes when you have posters and talks due so if the numerator isn't sufficiently big to make this ratio like 4 I wouldn't bother. Any guess at actual numbers is a guess as I have done lots of linux but very little mac, but you are easily looking at a meltdown once a month that sucks up one whole day, and setup and testing will take the better part of week. So over the course of 6 months this is easily 88 hours (40 + 6*8). So the savings in run time had better be 352 hours or more.

Well enough ranting, papers don't write themselves, spacecraft don't build themselves, and certainly paperwork doesn't move from one side of my desk to the other by itself.

Cheers,

Brian

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