Subject: Good programming practices and commercial development with IDL

Posted by medd on Fri, 22 Oct 2010 12:41:04 GMT

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Hi all,

I believe here are the most competent IDL developers, I am facing a
tough decision and would be thankful for tips.

I am planning to use IDL to develop a commercial application together
with 2 colleagues, and I was wondering whether this is smart or
stupid. The application is within the field of medical image analysis,
and it should be later sold -after FDA approval- to medical centers.
This means also that good programming practices (e.g. ISO standards)
should be followed.

I have experience in other languages, but IDL is currently the
language I feel more familiar with. Yet, not for developing commercial
applications but for bad quality, research related programming. Let me
put it as a pros/cons list.

Pros:
+Large experience with IDL
+Developing with IDL is fast (as compared to languages like C++)
+IDL has many built-in features for image processing
+IDL8 seems powerful despite some bugs to be fixed
+The tools from mgalloy (doc and unit testing) seem very helpful to
support a high-quality development.

Cons:
-IDL is not for free.
-Even worse, IDL is EXPENSIVE!!!!
    -> Do you know if ITT VIS would give licenses for free to start-
ups for a few years the same way many other companies do? (Microsoft
wit BizSpark, Sun, etc.) I am in Europe, but ITT VIS took over Creaso
now...
-The clients should see the IDL VM window every time or I should pay a
runtime license for each client... money is the issue again
-There are not many tools to support the development with IDL (with
the notable exception of the tools from mgalloy)
-There are hardly any publicly available IDL libraries
-There is not a large IDL community to provide help & support (I found
this forum to be the most valuable)
-It is almost impossible to find IDL programmers. And really good
programmers might not even want to learn IDL
-IDL has bugs, most other programming languages don't

Well, the list of cons turned out to be long...

Do you think it is crazy to go with IDL? Do you know of other companies which have done this? I feel like I am going to jump into a swimming pool without knowing if there is water in there.