
Subject: Re: Kodak buys RSI!!

Posted by [Pete Riley](#) on Mon, 25 Sep 2000 07:00:00 GMT

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"David Fanning" <davidf@dfanning.com> wrote in message
news:MPG.1439c39132ed1995989c36@news.frii.com...

> Why don't you wait until after you get IDL 5.4. I
> figure that will be around at least for a little while. :-)
>

Hello David:

After beta-testing 5.4 for a while I'm not impressed at our \$250 per license investments. Of course that's not fair: I don't expect small-version increments to yield much, but I was holding out for a 6.0 that would integrate *real* object graphics with the syntax of direct graphics (another wild dream). I'm skeptical now that there will be a 6.0.

I would like something more definitive from David Stern/RSI as to their future plans and support for IDL. Their lack of specificity in this announcement makes me uneasy about IDL's future. It might be time to hedge our bets and look at the competition. Although RSI has always perceived Matlab to be the enemy (which is probably fair, financially speaking), both AVS and OpenDX have a lot to offer and cover both ends of the expense-ware spectrum. Who's up for a round of Scientific anal/vis software comparisons?

BTW, was this a complete surprise to you?

-Pete

Subject: Re: Kodak buys RSI!!

Posted by [davidf](#) on Mon, 25 Sep 2000 07:00:00 GMT

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Pete Riley (uk2@linuxfan.com) is going to get us into it when he writes:

> What's the word on the street? This is news to me. A couple of questions:
>
> 1. Why does Kodak want RSI?

I'm guessing they will find it much easier to sell their imaging hardware if they have decent software to go with it. We all know that hardware is pretty much, well, hardware without something to make those numbers sing. :-)

> 2. Given the answer to 1., what does this *really* mean for the future of
> IDL?

Who knows? I'm pretty sure no one at RSI knows, and Kodak probably doesn't have any idea. I'm guessing that Kodak is probably more interested in ENVI than they are in IDL, but I suspect they probably realize that their customers will want both. A nice menu-based system with lots of built-in tools for image analysis and visualization, but a language too for the researchers who prefer to roll their own.

I wouldn't be a bit surprised to see IDL and ENVI become two sides of the same coin, with similar capability and functionality, but with two different ways of working with the imaging data. I think we are probably safe in assuming IDL will become less a tool for all people, and will become more focused on image processing. That's a boon for the imaging folks, surely, but may mean something else to folks less interested in imaging.

And I wouldn't be at all surprised to see tools like VIP and ION dropped pretty quickly. I just don't see how they fit into "Kodak" at all.

> I wonder whether we can get a refund on our maintenance contracts?

Why don't you wait until after you get IDL 5.4. I figure that will be around at least for a little while. :-)

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.
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Subject: Re: Kodak buys RSI!!
Posted by [Pete Riley](#) on Tue, 26 Sep 2000 07:00:00 GMT
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Hi Ronn:

I do hope you're right. But from a business perspective, unless your specific needs fall within the narrow interest that Kodak has for RSI, I think it's a lost cause. And it's not that I'm not an optimist....I was a Manchester City fan for 10 years.

My primary interests lie in timeseries analysis and visualization of 3-D simulation datasets. As best as I can tell, these two fields, which are currently well-covered in IDL, are not aligned with Kodak's primary interests. Now I've already paid for my 5.4 licences, so I'm not going to jump ship just yet. It would, however, take some convincing from David Stern or others in higher positions at RSI to convince me to stay.

We should remember that IDL is a good all-around product, but it has a number of limitations. Perhaps this is the perfect kick we need to embrace open technology and all plough our efforts into openDX?

If you want to be unrealistically optimistic, how about the following scenario: Kodak only wants Spyglass technology, or whatever, and doesn't care about IDL. They follow IBMs lead and make the IDL source code publically available....then I wake up.

-Pete

"ronn kling" <ronn@rlkling.com> wrote in message
news:B5F67EBD.A90%ronn@rlkling.com...

- > Everyone,
- >
- > My first reaction when I saw the announcement was "great! Now they can put
- > real money and backing into IDL". I know that most of the posts have been
- > negative, but I just don't see it that way.
- >
- > First, as someone who is out doing cold calls to get work, the buying of
- > RSI
- > by Kodak is only a plus. Now I can say that I do most of my development
- > using a product from Kodak instead of saying "a small company in Boulder".
- > I can't understate how much more comfortable this will make potential
- > customers of IDL. And of course, the more IDL customers, the better the
- > product should be.
- >
- > Second, Kodak has the cash to add more engineers to the development team.
- > This should only improve the product we get.
- >
- > Third, even if image processing is the emphasis and not pure science that
- > will only help us. Image people are as interested in surface fitting,
- > fft's, 2D and 3D graphics, optimization, and statistical techniques as we
- > are.
- >
- > Finally, even if (when) Kodak decides to expand out of the traditional IDL

> market they will pay attention to current users. To not do that would be
> extremely shortsighted, and since Kodak has been around about 100 years I
> don't expect that behaviour from them.
>
> Call me an optimist, but I still think the purchase is a great thing!
>
>
> -Ronn
>
> --
> Ronn Kling
> Ronn Kling Consulting
> email: ronn@rlkling.com
> "Application Development with IDL" programming book updated for IDL5.3!
> Shareware and Freeware at: <http://www.rlkling.com/>
>
>

Subject: Re: Kodak buys RSI!!
Posted by [davidf](#) on Tue, 26 Sep 2000 07:00:00 GMT
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Wayne Landsman (landsman@my-deja.com) writes:

> Now how do the Boulder employees feel about moving to Rochester, NY??

I heard those Kodak folks wear ties. I just don't
know what kind of tie fits in with cut-offs and
a T-shirt. :-)

I'm listening with interest to the half-full guys,
but surely there will be some kind of culture shock
on someone's part. Suits are just not the RSI way.

Cheers,

David

--

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Subject: Re: Kodak buys RSI!!
Posted by [landsman](#) on Tue, 26 Sep 2000 07:00:00 GMT
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I also fall into the "glass is half full" camp.

First of all, I think it natural that Kodak would want to acquire RSI.
If 70% of my business were from the sale of film (that's the number the papers quoted for Kodak this week), then I would try to get into the digital world as fast as possible, and acquisition of RSI would seem a natural step.

At least in astronomy, Kodak has a long history of working with scientists.

And even if Kodak focuses future developments toward imaging, most of these 2-d tools (e.g. wavelets, time-series) should also be applicable for 1-d spectra -- that is sort of the way that IDL is designed.

And Kodak may have the marketing power to substantially increase the IDL market, and maybe even decrease the price per license. (Boy, I really am an optimist!)

My main concern is that the direction of IDL can now be subject to the whims of Kodak headquarters, especially given their current financial problems. So I will be watching the next few months to see if Kodak has a coherent plan for RSI.

Now how do the Boulder employees feel about moving to Rochester, NY??

--Wayne Landsman

Sent via Deja.com <http://www.deja.com/>
Before you buy.

Subject: Re: Kodak buys RSI!!
Posted by [ronn](#) on Tue, 26 Sep 2000 07:00:00 GMT
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Everyone,

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First, as someone who is out doing cold calls to get work, the buying of RSI

by Kodak is only a plus. Now I can say that I do most of my development using a product from Kodak instead of saying "a small company in Boulder". I can't understate how much more comfortable this will make potential customers of IDL. And of course, the more IDL customers, the better the product should be.

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Finally, even if (when) Kodak decides to expand out of the traditional IDL market they will pay attention to current users. To not do that would be extremely shortsighted, and since Kodak has been around about 100 years I don't expect that behaviour from them.

Call me an optimist, but I still think the purchase is a great thing!

-Ronn

--

Ronn Kling

Ronn Kling Consulting

email: ronn@rlkling.com

"Application Development with IDL" 1½ programming book updated for IDL5.3!

Shareware and Freeware at: <http://www.rlkling.com/>

Subject: Re: Kodak buys RSI!!

Posted by [promashkin](#) on Tue, 26 Sep 2000 07:00:00 GMT

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I saw a lot of concerned posts this morning. Do you think that, in addition to speculating about what will happen, we also should *ask* that pieces of IDL that we use remain maintained and developed? I personally plan to, because what I use IDL for (as well as some major customers such as NASA and NOAA atmospheric modeling communities) purposes other than image processing.

I realize that a decision is probably brewing already in their headquarters, but we *can ask*. IMHO, it would not be very popular tactics for Kodak to just discontinue a number of services that have demand, and Kodak will not do that. But I think it will not hurt if customers *asked* that those services continue.

Cheers,

Pavel

Subject: Re: Kodak buys RSI!!

Posted by [Bill Sawchuck](#) on Tue, 26 Sep 2000 07:00:00 GMT

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wbiagiot@suffolk.lib.ny.us (wbiagiot@suffolk.lib.ny.us) writes:

- > Bill S.,
- >
- > Not for nothing, but RSI represents the top molecule of a drop in the
- > Kodak pail. I came from a \$100M a year division of a \$2B a year
- > company that was swallowed by a \$8B a year company and you know what?
- > They let us just die off. <snip>

Understand your concern. I hope things work out for the best (in terms of continued positive developments on the IDL front). I don't want to take any bets either way, however. We will just have to wait and see.

As a shareholder of the Dow Diamonds, I do still think it is strange that I now own a very tiny piece of RSI. I am also glad that I do not own Kodak by itself. ;-)

Bill Sawchuck
Alexandria, VA

Subject: Re: Kodak buys RSI!!

Posted by [davidf](#) on Tue, 26 Sep 2000 07:00:00 GMT

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Bill Biagiot (wbiagiot@suffolk.lib.ny.us) writes:

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- > Kodak pail. I came from a \$100M a year division of a \$2B a year
- > company that was swallowed by a \$8B a year company and you know what?
- > They let us just die off. Hence all my prior comments. I just emailed
- > RSI with a question as to whether Daniel Stern is staying at the helm -
- > I'll let everyone know the answer. And in the total irrelevant
- > category: Kodak is trading below the 52 week low today, lol.

My understanding is that David Stern (nee Daniel Stern) will have the official title of Founder and Chief Technologist. I think that means he gets a big office and a chance to work on technical projects that interest him without the headache of running the company. My understanding is that Kodak has a manager currently in place at RSI and they are looking

for a full-time CEO. I think Kodak has made it clear about who is in charge. :-)

Cheers,

David

--

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Subject: Re: Kodak buys RSI!!

Posted by [wbiagiot](#) on Tue, 26 Sep 2000 07:00:00 GMT

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--

"They don't think it be like it is, but it do."

Oscar Gamble, NY Yankees

Sent via Deja.com <http://www.deja.com/>
Before you buy.

Subject: Re: Kodak buys RSI!!

Posted by [wbiagiot](#) on Tue, 26 Sep 2000 07:00:00 GMT

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My opinion: Anything that is not a cash-cow or is desired intellectual property, is going to be cast aside or divested to someone else that wants it. Why should this company be different from any other? Be there - done that.

That having been said - IMO, this is not a positive development.

--

"They don't think it be like it is, but it do."

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Sent via Deja.com <http://www.deja.com/>
Before you buy.

Subject: Re: Kodak buys RSI!!
Posted by [Sawchuck\[1\]](#) on Tue, 26 Sep 2000 07:00:00 GMT
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Pete Riley (uk2@linuxfan.com) writes:

> Hello IDLers,
>
> What's the word on the street? <snip>

The word is that RSI is now "on the street". Wall Street that is. RSI is now a part of the Dow Industrials! How about that? The performance of RSI will now be reflected (in some very minor respect) in the movement of the DJIA along with the likes of Intel and Microsoft and a few other fly-by-night organizations. ;-)

As an aside, EK issued a profit warning today. Coincidence? :-(

It will be interesting to watch how this deal works out in the end, but as an investor, it is a very interesting move to say the least. I got in touch with some folks at RSI a few years ago to see if they had any plans on going public in the future. I guess I have my answer now.

Bill Sawchuck
Alexandria, VA

Subject: Re: Kodak buys RSI!!
Posted by [davidf](#) on Tue, 26 Sep 2000 07:00:00 GMT
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William (wmc@bas.ac.uk) writes:

> Sounds like a bad scenario to me. I'll have to hope you're wrong...

I tried to make it obvious that I'm just as much

in the dark about what this "really" means as anyone else. You just figure that Kodak, the "imaging as information" people, are probably focusing on the "image" part of any list they happen to be prioritizing. I know I would be.

> I do essentially no image processing, just like the vast majority
> of people I know using IDL / PV-WAVE (hey, does that mean we'll have
> to switch over to PV-WAVE?).

I'm sure the PV-Wave and Matlab folks will make it their business to make you think so. But I would resist their efforts for a year or so. NO one knows what this means yet. And IDL is NOT going away anytime soon. It is WAY too early to panic. :-)

> ps - did any of your stock options come in?!?

Ha!

Cheers,

David

--

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Posted by [davidf](#) on Tue, 26 Sep 2000 07:00:00 GMT
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Pete Riley (uk2@linuxfan.com) writes:

> BTW, was this a complete surprise to you?

A complete surprise!? Uh, no. I've been working in the software business for a long time. I don't think I'm capable of "complete" surprise anymore. :-)

Cheers,

David

--

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Subject: Re: Kodak buys RSI!!
Posted by [wmc](#) on Tue, 26 Sep 2000 07:00:00 GMT
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I do essentially no image processing, just like the vast majority
of people I know using IDL / PV-WAVE (hey, does that mean we'll have
to switch over to PV-WAVE?).

-W

ps - did any of your stock options come in?!?

--

William M Connolley | wmc@bas.ac.uk | <http://www.nerc-bas.ac.uk/icd/wmc/>
Climate Modeller, British Antarctic Survey | Disclaimer: I speak for myself

Subject: Re: Kodak buys RSI!!
Posted by [wrb1000](#) on Wed, 27 Sep 2000 07:00:00 GMT
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Hey, I got a reply from the COO at RSI concerning my earlier question
about D. Stern's new position. Without further ado, the answer is:

Dear Mr. <Me>,

Thank you very much for your email. My name is Denise Fields and I am
the Chief Operating Officer at Research Systems. To answer your
question Mr. Stern will continue with the company. His position and
title will be Founder and Chief Technologist. He will be focused on
product direction and strategy and certainly understanding the needs of

our customers. He has certainly been operating in this capacity for the last few years (amongst other things) and this new partnership will allow him to focus even more time on the products and the customers.

If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Best Regards,
Denise M. Fields

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Oscar Gamble, NY Yankees

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