
Subject: java vs. IDL

Posted by [reardonb](#) on Fri, 03 Nov 2000 16:17:09 GMT

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Lately I have been learning java to address a number of modeling issues where I work. I have also been playing around with IDL for about 3 years. I do not claim to be a master of either. It seems to me, however, that Java offers many of the same features that IDL offers (cross platform operability, a constantly growing library of functions, easy to implement gui's) along with some definite advantages (it's free, it's easier to learn, larger user/programmer base, completely OO) It makes me wonder whether IDL will be able to hold its own in a Java world. Could anyone out there with experience in both languages care to speculate or at least enlighten me as to why IDL will always have a niche?

Thanks.

Brian Reardon

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Subject: Re: java vs. IDL

Posted by [Nick Bower](#) on Sat, 11 Nov 2000 17:17:52 GMT

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i'm quite surprised that no-one is mentioning or discussing ION. I'm not familiar with it, but it seemed like a decent enough idea. And some critical analysis would be interesting to read.

nick

Subject: Re: java vs. IDL

Posted by [reardonb](#) on Wed, 22 Nov 2000 00:45:12 GMT

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thanks, Vernon. Good break down of pros and cons.

In article <8u8v2n\$odl\$1@houston.jhuapl.edu>,

"Vernon Stark" <vern.stark@jhuapl.edu> wrote:

> I have over 15 years of IDL experience and have also done a
limited
> amount of Java over the past few years. IDL has an excellent base
of
> software you can tap into to do math, plotting, image manipulation,

etc.

> It's also easy to code GUIs once you get the hang of it. In IDL, I can sit

> down with a text file full of data and have it plotted in a matter of
> minutes. The last time I tried to do that in Java, I found the file I/O

> very limited. Just reading in and parsing the data from the text file was a

> pain.

>

> We've also found IDL excellent for software prototyping. In a few
> months we put together a GUI application that does a lot of file I/O, image

> manipulation, and handling of user input via GUIs. It started out as
> roughly 10,000 lines of code and we've been adding to it and tweaking it and

> it's grown to roughly 20,000 lines of code. We've toyed with the idea of

> porting this GUI application to Java, but have stayed with IDL since it has

> all the functionality we need and has served us very well so far in the

> development of this application. The IDL library really facilitates image

> manipulation, equation solving, plotting, etc. It would probably take a lot

> more than 20,000 lines of Java code to have the same functionality.

>

> In short, the functionality of IDL allows one to quickly analyze and

> visualize data or do software prototyping. We feel we can get our data

> analysis done and our software prototypes up and running faster in IDL than

> we could in Java. If your goal is data analysis or software prototyping, IDL

> is hard to beat. If your goal is to have a nice piece of object oriented

> code, you might choose Java. At the risk of stereotyping, I'd sum it up by

> suggesting that if you're a data analyst you'll probably prefer IDL and if

> you're a computer scientist you may prefer Java.

>

> Vern

>

> <reardonb@my-deja.com> wrote in message
news:8tuodt\$g0m\$1@nnrp1.deja.com...

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