
Subject: Re: Mac OS info

Posted by [Ken Prager](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2001 17:36:45 GMT

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In article <3BC5CFEC.A3F1154B@jhuapl.edu>,

"Noam R. Izenberg" <noam.izenberg@jhuapl.edu> wrote:

- > The RSI staff had a company wide meeting this morning. I happened to call a
- > contact just after and
- > talked for a while. I have some info, some changed opinions, and a potential
- > route to more
- > information later today.
- >
- > Changes:
- > I'm convinced Kodak has little or nothing to do with the decision. Aside from
- > more meetings and
- > profitability pressure, Kodak is not seen as dictating anything to RSI.
- >
- > I'm convinced that the decision to drop OS X was financially based, though
- > that further convinces me
- > the analysis was wrongheaded and/or incomplete. The following points are what
- > I gleaned. YMMV
- > - RSI's sales dropped 50% 1999 to 2000
- > - The largest new contract was either not mac and/or not supportive of Mac
- > updates.
- > - The largest mac contractor was not up for helping with OS X development
- > costs
- > - Apple itself was stingy with information (regarding market predictions for
- > OS X) and unwilling to
- > help development other than with some hardware.
- > - RSI realized that with just Thierry doing the programming, the whole
- > project was a pizza truck
- > accident away from total loss, so at least a backup programmer was needed ->
- > more expense.
- >
- > I still think they're wrong about the recoverability of the expense, but
- > that's for another
- > conversation.
- >
- > Info:
- > At today's meeting two possibilities were discussed:
- > 1) Support of IDL 5.5 in Classic mode of OS X is being considered. I already
- > use 5.4 in Classic mode
- > at I would say 95% efficiency even without support. [Opinion: This might give
- > IDL time to observe the
- > market response to OS X to re-evaluate their decision]
- > 2) A port or emulator for IDL into Mac Linux is being considered. Not an
- > aqua-ized total rewrite, but

- > something to let us run IDL natively in OS X nonetheless. [Opinion: as a
- > command line user of IDL,
- > this would be plenty for me.]
- > Also: Thierry, though relieved of OS X is still salaried and/or retained
- > until the end of the year,
- > and is apparently being taken good care of. Indicates he (hopefully) would
- > not be averse to coming
- > back to the project (even as a contractor).
- > Also: Management has been at least somewhat receptive to reported offers from
- > outsiders to finish
- > at least a port, if not full a OS X version.
- > Also: Our concerns are being heard and given a company wide floor to air.
- > Also: The information to customers is recognized as being poor and
- > insufficient. They are working
- > on better communications. The proof of that will be seen or not in the next
- > few days.
- >
- > Hopefully more later,
- >
- > Noam

Thanks for the update!

Ken Prager

Subject: Re: Mac OS info

Posted by [Mark Hadfield](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2001 21:02:40 GMT

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- > The RSI staff had a company wide meeting this morning.
- > I happened to call a contact just after and
- > talked for a while. I have some info, some changed opinions,
- > and a potential route to more information later today.

Thanks.

NB: I wrote my message in the other thread asking you for more info about the financial aspects before I saw this.

I just spoke to CEO Mike Scally(?) who estimated the cost of fully developing & supporting Mac OS X as \$0.5M. Not peanuts. Several times he mentioned that it used a very different code base from other versions.

- > - RSI's sales dropped 50% 1999 to 2000

What!?! This worries me much more than loss of Mac support. (Not that I don't

sympathise guys, but I've got a PC and a hungry ocean model to support.)

Mark Hadfield
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National Institute for Water and Atmospheric Research

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Posted from clam.niwa.cri.nz [202.36.29.1]
via Mailgate.ORG Server - <http://www.Mailgate.ORG>

Subject: Re: Mac OS info
Posted by [Dennis Boccippio](#) on Fri, 12 Oct 2001 14:11:06 GMT
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In article <005101c15298\$0db30ff0\$d938a8c0@Hadfield>,
"Mark Hadfield" <m.hadfield@niwa.cri.nz> wrote:

> Thanks.
>
> NB: I wrote my message in the other thread asking you for more info about
> the financial aspects before I saw this.
>
> I just spoke to CEO Mike Scally(?) who estimated the cost of fully
> developing & supporting Mac OS X as \$0.5M. Not peanuts. Several times he
> mentioned that it used a very different code base from other versions.
>

This makes the issue even more disconcerting. \$500K is about 250-300 licenses at Un*x rates. I really find it hard to believe there won't be that many converts from Un*x boxes (or new Powerbook license purchases), and that the "review of the current MacOS user base" neglects this factor.

It costs us a *heck* of a lot more to maintain our boutique SGIs (almost solely for the purpose of running IDL) than our desktop machines. IT support is higher, memory expansion is more expensive, network card upgrades are more expensive, we can't add low-cost FireWire drives for disk expansion (a BIG drawback), etc, and we usually also have to maintain a desktop Mac or PC in the same office _anyway_.

In our small group of 12, we have 4 Mac owners, only one of which ponied up for an IDL/MacOS license, primarily because IDL/MacOS was hobbled by the non-multitasking thing. I know the other 3 would go IDL/OS-X if it were available. The reduced maintenance costs would even justify buying

these as new licenses, rather than platform conversions, and even at Un*x rates. That doesn't even consider new licenses for Powerbooks. ~100 similar stories would add up to \$500K pretty quickly...

- Dennis Boccippio
