
Subject: Re: Any cross-platform IDL alternatives?
Posted by [Martin Otte](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2001 03:03:00 GMT
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It looks like now is the time to start compiling a list of open-source, mainly unix alternatives to IDL which can be used on OS X. Here are some contributions to such a list, with the descriptions largely copied from the software's home pages:

<http://plasma-gate.weizmann.ac.il/Grace/>

From what I read on the web, Grace is probably the most 'mature' analysis and plotting package available for free for Unix

<http://ana.lmsal.com/>

ANA is a free, extensive, interactive data and image processing software package and language. In the past, I have compiled it under LINUX, and the language and commands that it uses are similar to (but not as good as) IDL. The web page doesn't seem to be working as of this evening, and I don't think that I have a copy of the source code saved. If only a few former IDL users had some time to 'hack' at this, it could probably develop into a viable clone/alternative to IDL.

<http://scigraphica.sourceforge.net/>

SciGraphica is a scientific application for data analysis and technical graphics. It pretends to be a clone of the popular commercial (and expensive) application "Microcal Origin"

<http://www.gnome.org/projects/guppi/>

Guppi is an interactive data analysis application. Guppi is meant to be both powerful and user-friendly. Guppi is not a clone of any existing system, but it is meant to be a free replacement for proprietary tools like Systat, IDL and Microcal Origin.

<http://www.octave.org>

GNU Octave is a high-level language, primarily intended for numerical computations. It provides a convenient command line interface for solving linear and nonlinear problems numerically, and for performing other numerical experiments using a language that is mostly compatible with Matlab.

<http://SAL.KachinaTech.COM/>

SAL (Scientific Applications on Linux) is a collection of information and links to software that will be of interest to scientists and engineers. With over 3,000 software packages listed, this should be the first stop for people looking for IDL alternatives.

<http://www.seul.org/sci/index.html>

The Linux in Science web page has some interesting information which may be useful for OS X.

Martin Otte

In article <B7EA25A6.AD69%wilersh@mac.com>, Eric Williams
<wilersh@mac.com> wrote:

> Since RSI/Kodak is killing IDL for the Mac (and others) I am wondering if
> anyone has suggestions for trying out some other cross-platform software. I
> am not really worried too much about Windows but the Mac/*nix world is where
> I work. We use IDL mostly for processing astronomical data and writing
> procedures to play with the data visually. So a tool with a simple language
> and good graphing capabilities is what we really need.
>
> BTW, if anyone from RSI cares, I only have two Mac licenses but I have
> brought 31 Solaris licenses to my campus since coming here, with plenty more
> potential on the horizon. Once I have an alternative tool I will be
> recommending against purchasing anymore licenses and dropping maintenance.
> Too bad because I have been a huge evangelist for IDL over the years. I have
> turned more than 50 students and scientists onto IDL in the last few years
> which has resulted in most likely hundreds of licenses if not many more as
> they have moved onto other sites. That will all stop now and I will try to
> do the opposite, and probably save some money too.
>
> Bye bye IDL, it WAS great...

Subject: Re: Any cross-platform IDL alternatives?
Posted by [Perry Phillips](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2001 16:29:22 GMT
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Thanks for the info. Our group has just start a new machine with a Linux based data acquisition system. I had been recommending IDL as a cross platform analysis tool. No longer! We will be phaseing out our existing lincenses and looking for alternatives.

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Perry Phillips p.phillips@mail.utexas.edu

Subject: Re: Any cross-platform IDL alternatives?
Posted by [Eric Williams](#) on Thu, 11 Oct 2001 16:49:28 GMT

Thanks Martin! I'll try those out.

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Eric Williams
wilersh@snet.net

Subject: Re: Any cross-platform IDL alternatives?

Posted by [pit](#) on Sat, 13 Oct 2001 15:37:00 GMT

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Martin Otte <mjotte@bellsouth.net> writes:

- > <http://plasma-gate.weizmann.ac.il/Grace/>
- > From what I read on the web, Grace is probably the most 'mature'
- > analysis and plotting package available for free for Unix

Maybe mature (based on xmgr), but by far not what a typical IDL user expects:

Grace is a WYSIWYG 2D plotting tool...

- > <http://ana.lmsal.com/>
- > ANA is a free, extensive, interactive data and image processing
- > software package and language. In the past, I have compiled it under
- > LINUX, and the language and commands that it uses are similar to (but
- > not as good as) IDL. The web page doesn't seem to be working as of this
- > evening, and I don't think that I have a copy of the source code saved.
- > If only a few former IDL users had some time to 'hack' at this, it
- > could probably develop into a viable clone/alternative to IDL.

Yes, it is (was?) a thing very comparable to IDL. I found it a bit confusing in syntax, as it was very similar to IDL - but still different. As far as I know, the last developer (L.Strouss) left science, I don't know what is happening with ANA now. At least the Source is around, so it could easily be pushed as 'the' alternative.

On a graduate school, one of the lecturers was using Yorick (<ftp://ftp-icf.llnl.gov/pub/Yorick/doc/index.html>). It is named a package for linear algebra, but also has general numeric and display routines. It also is an interpreted language like IDL

Pit

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