
Subject: Re: Mac Scoop (Addition/Correction)

Posted by [Noam R. Izenberg](#) on Fri, 12 Oct 2001 10:55:59 GMT

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"Pavel A. Romashkin" wrote:

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> ...We know it is all Apple's fault. If
> they want people to use their computers, they better finance development
> of software for them. ...

On that front, I have two corrections and one addition:

Correction 1) From earlier, I relayed that RSI sales were down 50% from 1999-2000. That was incorrect. _Mac_ sales at RSI have been down 50% each year for the past _3_ years.

Correction 2) I relayed Apple gave RSI a G4 to help their Mac effort. That was incorrect. Apple gave several machines and good general hardware support. RSI, however needed/needs other types of support as well - critical things like documentation help, engineering resource support, etc.

My additional news is on that front. RSI and Apple have been communicating (yesterday) with positive results that are now being evaluated by RSI. Look for an announcement maybe late next week.

A new statement from Mike Scally (CEO) should be on the web sometime today addressing allot of this.

Noam

Subject: Re: Mac Scoop (Addition/Correction)

Posted by [Joseph B. Gorman](#) on Fri, 12 Oct 2001 12:50:52 GMT

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In article <3BC6CC3F.185F0B29@jhuapl.edu>, "Noam R. Izenberg"
<noam.izenberg@jhuapl.edu> wrote:

[snip]

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- > maybe late next week.
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- > A new statement from Mike Scally (CEO) should be on the web sometime
- > today addressing alot of this.
- >
- > Noam
- >

I look forward to that statement. I would also like to thank Noam for talking to the RSI management on behalf not only of himself, but the Mac OS IDL community.

As is usual (among scientists, IDL users, and Mac users), I do have a couple of quibbles with his statements in earlier posts, if applied to all of us Mac IDL users.

We went heavily into G4's in anticipation of the Mac OS X version of IDL, and the implicit understanding that it would support Unix-like features, such as environment variables --- which would allow us to run a large, cross-platform codebase on this best of all platforms.

Linux would not help us at all; we are at a very security-conscious institution, and the sheer number of CERT advisories per week on Linux variants makes it clear that serious sys admin overhead is necessary --- it may be for OS X as well, but so far we've cleared the first sets of scans and probes. More to the point, there are other Mac apps we need, and the simple desk space and cost of having one machine to do serious computing and one for all the "standard" apps that still don't exist for Linux (sorry, Gimp fans) is no longer justifiable.

If Apple isn't able to make it worth RSI's while, I suggest forming a non-profit consortium to buy the existing OS X IDL code, get it finished, and do that community Q & A of which RSI appears to be so scared. We could even promise to give whatever license fees aren't spent on the development and Q & A effort back to RSI --- what have they got to lose? Especially since all of us diehard Mac fanatics would never buy a Windows machine, even if it meant giving up our firstborn children, PT Cruisers, Malibu beach houses, and private islands. Oops, let the cat

out of the bag --- if the Windows people find out that's how all Mac users live, they might want to join the party....

Thanks again,

Joe Gurman

Subject: Re: Mac Scoop (Addition/Correction)
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Fri, 12 Oct 2001 13:03:22 GMT
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Joseph B. Gurman (gurman@crosslink.net) writes:

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> a Windows machine, even if it meant giving up our firstborn children, PT
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> out of the bag --- if the Windows people find out that's how all Mac
> users live, they might want to join the party....

I take back everything I ever said about the Mac not being a serious machine for science. Clearly (as my e-mail demonstrates) I was completely wrong about that. But, while feeling chagrined, I am also heartened to know that the Mac fans are every bit as fanatical as they ever were. Long live Mac zealotry and alternatives to corporate sameness! :-)

Cheers,

David

--

David W. Fanning, Ph.D.
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Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>
Toll-Free IDL Book Orders: 1-888-461-0155

Subject: Re: Mac Scoop (Addition/Correction)
Posted by [Noam R. Izenberg](#) on Fri, 12 Oct 2001 13:15:24 GMT
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"Joseph B. Gurman" wrote:

> As is usual (among scientists, IDL users, and Mac users), I do have

- > a couple of quibbles with his statements in earlier posts, if applied to
- > all of us Mac IDL users.

It wouldn't be a proper gathering if opinions did not outnumber attendees.

- > We went heavily into G4's in anticipation of the Mac OS X version of
- > IDL, and the implicit understanding that it would support Unix-like
- > features, such as environment variables --- which would allow us to run
- > a large, cross-platform codebase on this best of all platforms.
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- > Linux would not help us at all;...

Joe,

Let me apologize, then. I am fairly ignorant of the differences between Linux and Unix. I've dabbled over the last decade in, what, 5 or 6 *ux/*ix systems (and VMS, and a couple others way back). Jack

of several trades (well, maybe a 6), Master of none. Given that I probably mis-spoke because of this ignorance, I should tell you RSI and Apple were talking Unix yesterday, not Linux, but that's basically all I know until they finish their evaluation.

- > If Apple isn't able to make it worth RSI's while, I suggest forming
- > a non-profit consortium to buy the existing OS X IDL code, get it
- > finished, and do that community Q & A of which RSI appears to be so
- > scared. We could even promise to give whatever license fees aren't spent
- > on the development and Q & A effort back to RSI --- what have they got
- > to lose?

My suggestion- wait out the next week and see what flies. If it unsatisfactory, see if a consortium of volunteers can be gathered (one that would be willing to sign some kind of contract with RSI to protect the license), and pitch the case.

Noam

Subject: Re: Mac Scoop (Addition/Correction)

Posted by [Stein Vidar Hagfors H\[1\]](#) on Fri, 12 Oct 2001 15:57:22 GMT

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

- > "Pavel A. Romashkin" wrote:
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- >> they want people to use their computers, they better finance development

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> Correction 1) From earlier, I relayed that RSI sales were down 50% from

> 1999-2000. That was incorrect. _Mac_ sales at RSI have been down 50% each

> year for the past _3_ years.

Oh, well. No *wonder*. They're all waiting for the OS X solution to be up and running!! Probably a large bunch sitting on the sidelines, or having received their OS X machines *right now* (Viggo, hang in there ;-). The sounds you hear of paper hitting the recycling bin are all the purchase orders for Mac OS X licenses they were in the process of filling out :-)

--

Stein Vidar Hagfors Haugan

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Greenbelt, Maryland 20771, USA. Fax: 1-301-286-0264

Subject: Re: Mac Scoop (Addition/Correction)

Posted by [Dr. G. Scott Left](#) on Sat, 13 Oct 2001 08:12:43 GMT

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David and everone,

Like you, I thought the Mac was nearly unused for scientific computing.

When I switched industries, moving into the biosciences, I found out I was completely wrong. The Mac is very popular in biomedical engineering, pharmaceutical and biotechs, and in academic departments. Many of the people I know in this industry were largely unaware of IDL. When I show them what IDL can do, they're very interested...especially so because of IDL's support for the Mac. I was starting to visualize real growth opportunities for IDL-based tools in this industry when...

I only caught up with the Mac story recently when exchanging email with a friend (another ex-RSI employee...how many of us are there?). I was struck with the differences between the way RSI handled this and the way RSI _used_ to handle these things. Noam Izenberg's post on this topic was excellent and almost definitive. My question is on a different topic.

It seems many of us have ignored a scientific computing market with real needs. How could this have happened? How could all this business opportunity go so quietly unnoticed? Who should have done better?

Apple? Those of us who market products & services to the scientific community?

I'm interested in reading some opinions on this topic.

David Fanning wrote:

> Joseph B. Gurman (gurman@crosslink.net) writes:

>

>

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