
Subject: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [Matthew Powell](#) on Tue, 16 Oct 2001 17:36:11 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

As VP of Engineering and IT at Research Systems, I would like to elaborate on the posting from our CEO. I have been monitoring the newsgroups and understand that this is an issue that many of you are very passionate about. So, I felt it important to post this message to all of you.

As with most issues there is more than meets the eye with our recent announcement regarding our decision not to support Mac OS X. The most important one being that in our desire to be the best scientific visualization package we can be, we had to shed some unprofitable platforms in order to focus on the core platforms which make up the bulk of IDL sales. Our initial desire was to deliver a fully native OS X solution that included native widgets and a redesigned Aqua user interface. Once we realized the costs associated with doing that, we knew we could not support the Macintosh platform profitably. Whether we like it or not, in this day and age, profitability is a requirement for which we are held accountable.

Now for the good news. In subsequent discussions with Apple they have made us aware of a commercial X-Windows library for OS X. We are in the process of evaluating it for use in a native Unix/X-Windows implementation of IDL and ENVI for the Mac OS X platform. This would solve many technical issues for us and allow us to continue to support the Macintosh platform both natively and profitably, as it would leverage off our other Unix/X platforms. The only thing this does not accomplish is providing IDL with a new Aqua UI and widget set.

While I cannot promise this will be successful and that we can take it to market, we are very encouraged by our early results working with the library. We hope to have some solid results upon which we can base a solid commitment to our customers in the very near future. We certainly apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused you and your colleagues and ask that you give us an opportunity to complete our investigation and try to come up with a solution that will meet your needs and retain you as a satisfied customer of RSI.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Richard W. Cooke
Vice President, Engineering and IT
Research Systems, Inc. - A Kodak Company

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [Liam E. Gumley](#) on Wed, 17 Oct 2001 02:26:21 GMT

"Matthew Powell" <mpowell@rsinc.com> wrote in message
news:9qhr6c\$3to\$1@news.rsinc.com...

- > As VP of Engineering and IT at Research Systems, I would like to elaborate
- > on the posting from our CEO. I have been monitoring the newsgroups and
- > understand that this is an issue that many of you are very passionate
- > about.
- > So, I felt it important to post this message to all of you.
- >
- > As with most issues there is more than meets the eye with our recent
- > announcement regarding our decision not to support Mac OS X. The most
- > important one being that in our desire to be the best scientific
- > visualization package we can be, we had to shed some unprofitable
- > platforms
- > in order to focus on the core platforms which make up the bulk of IDL
- > sales.
- > Our initial desire was to deliver a fully native OS X solution that
- > included
- > native widgets and a redesigned Aqua user interface. Once we realized the
- > costs associated with doing that, we knew we could not support the
- > Macintosh
- > platform profitably. Whether we like it or not, in this day and age,
- > profitability is a requirement for which we are held accountable.
- >
- > Now for the good news. In subsequent discussions with Apple they have made
- > us aware of a commercial X-Windows library for OS X. We are in the
- > process
- > of evaluating it for use in a native Unix/X-Windows implementation of IDL
- > and ENVI for the Mac OS X platform. This would solve many technical
- > issues
- > for us and allow us to continue to support the Macintosh platform both
- > natively and profitably, as it would leverage off our other Unix/X
- > platforms. The only thing this does not accomplish is providing IDL with a
- > new Aqua UI and widget set.
- >
- > While I cannot promise this will be successful and that we can take it to
- > market, we are very encouraged by our early results working with the
- > library. We hope to have some solid results upon which we can base a solid
- > commitment to our customers in the very near future. We certainly
- > apologize
- > for any inconvenience this may have caused you and your colleagues and ask
- > that you give us an opportunity to complete our investigation and try to
- > come up with a solution that will meet your needs and retain you as a
- > satisfied customer of RSI.

Any comment from the community on whether this suggestion would meet the
needs of Mac OS X users? (That is, an OS X version of IDL that uses
X-Windows for direct/object graphics and user interface). Granted, you don't

get the fancy Aqua user interface, but do IDL programmers really care, as long as IDL is running on their Mac? For cross-platform development purposes, I would think a more UNIX-like version for the Mac would be a good thing.

Cheers,
Liam.
Practical IDL Programming
<http://www.gumley.com/>

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [John-David T. Smith](#) on Wed, 17 Oct 2001 04:25:54 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Liam Gumley wrote:

>
> "Matthew Powell" <mpowell@rsinc.com> wrote in message
> news:9qhr6c\$3to\$1@news.rsinc.com...
>> As VP of Engineering and IT at Research Systems, I would like to elaborate
>> on the posting from our CEO. I have been monitoring the newsgroups and
>> understand that this is an issue that many of you are very passionate
> about.
>> So, I felt it important to post this message to all of you.
>>
>> As with most issues there is more than meets the eye with our recent
>> announcement regarding our decision not to support Mac OS X. The most
>> important one being that in our desire to be the best scientific
>> visualization package we can be, we had to shed some unprofitable
> platforms
>> in order to focus on the core platforms which make up the bulk of IDL
> sales.
>> Our initial desire was to deliver a fully native OS X solution that
> included
>> native widgets and a redesigned Aqua user interface. Once we realized the
>> costs associated with doing that, we knew we could not support the
> Macintosh
>> platform profitably. Whether we like it or not, in this day and age,
>> profitability is a requirement for which we are held accountable.
>>
>> Now for the good news. In subsequent discussions with Apple they have made
>> us aware of a commercial X-Windows library for OS X. We are in the
> process
>> of evaluating it for use in a native Unix/X-Windows implementation of IDL
>> and ENVI for the Mac OS X platform. This would solve many technical
> issues
>> for us and allow us to continue to support the Macintosh platform both
>> natively and profitably, as it would leverage off our other Unix/X
>> platforms. The only thing this does not accomplish is providing IDL with a

>> new Aqua UI and widget set.
>>
>> While I cannot promise this will be successful and that we can take it to
>> market, we are very encouraged by our early results working with the
>> library. We hope to have some solid results upon which we can base a solid
>> commitment to our customers in the very near future. We certainly
> apologize
>> for any inconvenience this may have caused you and your colleagues and ask
>> that you give us an opportunity to complete our investigation and try to
>> come up with a solution that will meet your needs and retain you as a
>> satisfied customer of RSI.
>
> Any comment from the community on whether this suggestion would meet the
> needs of Mac OS X users? (That is, an OS X version of IDL that uses
> X-Windows for direct/object graphics and user interface). Granted, you don't
> get the fancy Aqua user interface, but do IDL programmers really care, as
> long IDL is running on their Mac? For cross-platform development purposes, I
> would think a more UNIX-like version for the Mac would be a good thing.

Though not an IDL mac-user per say, I would regard this as only a partial solution, not necessarily because the loss of an Aqua interface would inhibit sales (which of course it would) and confuse some users (imagine a Mac person looking at a Unix file-finding dialog -- filter, what filter?), but more importantly, X11 is not a standard component of OSX, but instead has been grafted on after the fact in various ways. RSI would need to bundle X11 with IDL and require running some X11 server, along with a Motif toolkit. This coexistence of the native graphics subsystem with X would probably severely hamper draw speed, both for widgets, and even for images/plots. It also might have some big consequences for OpenGL driven Object Graphics (support for which, as RSI previously bellowed from the hallways, was one of the striking new benefits available with OSX).

So while I think this would be better than *nothing* (and while they're at it, they might as well recompile for LinuxPPC), I believe it falls far short of a drop-in replacement, and would probably end up looking a little cruffy even for us cruft-hardened IDL wonks.

JD

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [Noam R. Izenberg](#) on Wed, 17 Oct 2001 10:53:44 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Liam Gumley wrote:

>
> Any comment from the community on whether this suggestion would meet the

- > needs of Mac OS X users? (That is, an OS X version of IDL that uses
- > X-Windows for direct/object graphics and user interface). Granted, you don't
- > get the fancy Aqua user interface, but do IDL programmers really care, as
- > long IDL is running on their Mac? For cross-platform development purposes, I
- > would think a more UNIX-like version for the Mac would be a good thing.

Speaking form myself, that's all I need. As long as it can take advantage of the CPU, I don't need or necessarily want the candy coating. If RSI can do this, IMO there is/will be no problem with the mac platform and It's future support.

Noam

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [btt](#) on Wed, 17 Oct 2001 13:20:39 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Hello,

My understanding of the issues is limited when it gets down to the details like X-Windows and OS X. The technicalities whiz over my head; I wish I could comment on this matter thoughtfully.

The overriding issue for me is access to the continuing new feature implementations in IDL. There are some features in the next release of IDL that we have been very excited about and anxiously awaiting for use in our Mac only lab facility. So far, every new IDL release has introduced features to our lab software that we have exploited as much as we can. That ever expanding capability for our platform is what we want out of IDL. I won't know what I'm missing from an OS X native IDL versus a UNIX like implementation...a price of ignorance, I guess. Unless the next implementation is a step down in performance from the classic Mac implementation, how could I argue against ANY continuation of Mac support? A fella who never had peppermint stick ice cream thinks that plain vanilla is ambrosia.

Ben

PS Rum raisin ice cream is my favorite.

----- Original Message -----

From: "Liam Gumley" <Liam.Gumley@ssec.wisc.edu>
Newsgroups: comp.lang.idl-pvwave
Sent: Tuesday, October 16, 2001 10:26 PM
Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering

>
> Any comment from the community on whether this suggestion would meet the
> needs of Mac OS X users? (That is, an OS X version of IDL that uses
> X-Windows for direct/object graphics and user interface). Granted, you
don't
> get the fancy Aqua user interface, but do IDL programmers really care, as
> long IDL is running on their Mac? For cross-platform development purposes,
I
> would think a more UNIX-like version for the Mac would be a good thing.
>
> Cheers,
> Liam.
> Practical IDL Programming
> <http://www.gumley.com/>
>
>
>

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [Pavel A. Romashkin](#) on Wed, 17 Oct 2001 15:13:24 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

I am certainly for this. Mainly because I am sure that if the support for OSX continues in any form, it will eventually include all the native features of OSX, including Aqua. I am *speculating* that many of these features are there already, and taking them out would be more of the effort than leaving them in. For one, I expect graphics already being (mostly) ready in the native OSX form. So, using existing Unix libraries to cut down on the cost of implementation might sustain the OSX version long enough to make it after a while what we all thought it will be.

Cheers,
Pavel

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [John-David T. Smith](#) on Wed, 17 Oct 2001 16:18:06 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

"Pavel A. Romashkin" wrote:

>
> I am certainly for this. Mainly because I am sure that if the support
> for OSX continues in any form, it will eventually include all the native
> features of OSX, including Aqua. I am *speculating* that many of these
> features are there already, and taking them out would be more of the
> effort than leaving them in. For one, I expect graphics already being

- > (mostly) ready in the native OSX form. So, using existing Unix libraries
- > to cut down on the cost of implementation might sustain the OSX version
- > long enough to make it after a while what we all thought it will be.

I think the real situation is this: RSI ran into a lot of work porting all of the drawing/widget code to Aqua, which is an entirely different API than either earlier MacOS, or Unix/Motif. It offers some significant advantages, but represents a pretty major display code fork (although with the option of eventually dropping MacOS <=9). So I doubt RSI would start with the abandoned OSX fork, try to strip out the Aqua interface stuff, and replace it with a X11/Motif subsystem. Instead, they'd start with their Linux or Solaris port, and try to migrate it over to the BSD layer of OSX + a proprietary X-server, without much more than a recompile and some fiddling.

Although obviously something is better than nothing, people should realize what they'd be getting with such a product: an undersupported and "ugly duckling" IDL knock-off, made explicitly to silence the critical masses. Their basic lack of commitment to the Mac platform would probably remain. On the other hand, I, like Pavel, am hopeful this attitude might change with time, and having some Mac development remaining would of course help.

JD

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [Bernard K.](#) on Wed, 17 Oct 2001 16:55:52 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

I am not familiar with command line IDL on Unix implementations. Could someone elaborate a bit more on what an Aqua-less IDL would probably look like? Just a command line tool that would resemble using the actual command line in IDL for OS9? Apart from loosing the IDL developer environment and its associated menus (file edit search run project macros etc) what else would be missing?

Thanks,
Bernard.

In article <3BCDAF3E.5B496216@astro.cornell.edu>, JD Smith
<jdsmith@astro.cornell.edu> wrote:

- > "Pavel A. Romashkin" wrote:
- >>
- >> I am certainly for this. Mainly because I am sure that if the support

>> for OSX continues in any form, it will eventually include all the native
>> features of OSX, including Aqua. I am *speculating* that many of these
>> features are there already, and taking them out would be more of the
>> effort than leaving them in. For one, I expect graphics already being
>> (mostly) ready in the native OSX form. So, using existing Unix libraries
>> to cut down on the cost of implementation might sustain the OSX version
>> long enough to make it after a while what we all thought it will be.
>
> I think the real situation is this: RSI ran into a lot of work porting
> all of the drawing/widget code to Aqua, which is an entirely different
> API than either earlier MacOS, or Unix/Motif. It offers some
> significant advantages, but represents a pretty major display code fork
> (although with the option of eventually dropping MacOS <=9). So I doubt
> RSI would start with the abandoned OSX fork, try to strip out the Aqua
> interface stuff, and replace it with a X11/Motif subsystem. Instead,
> they'd start with their Linux or Solaris port, and try to migrate it
> over to the BSD layer of OSX + a proprietary X-server, without much more
> than a recompile and some fiddling.
>
> Although obviously something is better than nothing, people should
> realize what they'd be getting with such a product: an undersupported
> and "ugly duckling" IDL knock-off, made explicit to silence the
> critical masses. Their basic lack of commitment to the Mac platform
> would probably remain. On the other hand, I, like Pavel, am hopeful
> this attitude might change with time, and having some Mac development
> remaining would of course help.
>
> JD

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [Pavel A. Romashkin](#) on Wed, 17 Oct 2001 17:06:52 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

"Bernard K." wrote:

>
> Apart from loosing the IDL
> developer environment and its associated menus (file edit search run
> project macros etc) what else would be missing?

A dedicated developer whom you could nicely work with :-(

Pavel

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [K. Bowman](#) on Wed, 17 Oct 2001 19:32:35 GMT

In article <9qiq2d\$jqg\$1@news.doit.wisc.edu>, Liam Gumley <Liam.Gumley@ssec.wisc.edu> wrote:

> Any comment from the community on whether this suggestion would meet the
> needs of Mac OS X users?

This would work fine for me, especially since I don't use the development environment. (I also like to think it was my idea ... ;-)
) I'm happy with BBEdit. BBEdit has good hooks into other development tools. It would be nice if RSI could get Barebones to add IDL syntax coloring to BBEdit and possibly breakpoints, automatic jump-to-error features, etc.

A semi-native Mac version will require an X Windows server. We have tried several under OS X. Our experience so far:

1. XFree86. Works, but to a Mac user feels very kludgy.
2. Xtools from Tenon. Very buggy. Not really usable, at least in the release we tried a few months ago.
3. Exodus. New OS X version seems to work well. Provides Aqua window manager (as well as Motif, etc.). I've used the OS 9 version for a long time. OS 9 version had some serious bugs, but recent releases have been stable and capable. Supports OpenGL, etc. We are planning to go with this.

Ken Bowman

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [John-David T. Smith](#) on Wed, 17 Oct 2001 21:57:47 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

"Bernard K." wrote:

>
> I am not familiar with command line IDL on Unix implementations. Could
> someone elaborate a bit more on what an Aqua-less IDL would probably
> look like? Just a command line tool that would resemble using the
> actual command line in IDL for OS9? Apart from loosing the IDL
> developer environment and its associated menus (file edit search run
> project macros etc) what else would be missing?

A Unix version for OSX would certainly not be command-line only. It would probably even have an IDLDE... only it would be a Unix/X-Windows program, so it would look more like a program running on Solaris or

Linux, and would otherwise be dissimilar from programs running under Aqua. The widget toolset would be unlike the MacOS widgets (lists, pop-up boxes, etc). It would require a "rootless" X server running in the background, which is also required for any other X-Windows programs to run. To Linux users who want to try MacOSX, it might be acceptable. To native Mac users, it would seem an abomination. To either kind of user, its display speed would probably seem too slow (though I'd be glad to be proven wrong).

JD

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [Dennis Boccippio](#) on Thu, 18 Oct 2001 05:38:31 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

In article <9qiq2d\$qjg\$1@news.doit.wisc.edu>,
"Liam Gumley" <Liam.Gumley@ssec.wisc.edu> wrote:

> Any comment from the community on whether this suggestion would meet the
> needs of Mac OS X users? (That is, an OS X version of IDL that uses
> X-Windows for direct/object graphics and user interface). Granted, you don't
> get the fancy Aqua user interface, but do IDL programmers really care, as
> long IDL is running on their Mac? For cross-platform development purposes, I
> would think a more UNIX-like version for the Mac would be a good thing.
>
> Cheers,
> Liam.
> Practical IDL Programming
> <http://www.gumley.com/>
>

It'd be fine by me. I don't need Aqua buttons and interfaces, but I do want IDL humming along doing batch jobs on my dual-800 G4 while I work on something else, so I can finally retire my expensive SGI. Not to mention a Powerbook license or two for field work....

- Dennis Boccippio
NASA/MSFC SD-60

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [Stein Vidar Hagfors H\[1\]](#) on Thu, 18 Oct 2001 13:56:30 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

JD Smith <jdsmith@astro.cornell.edu> writes:

> "Bernard K." wrote:
>>
>> I am not familiar with command line IDL on Unix implementations. Could
>> someone elaborate a bit more on what an Aqua-less IDL would probably
>> look like? Just a command line tool that would resemble using the
>> actual command line in IDL for OS9? Apart from loosing the IDL
>> developper environment and its associated menus (file edit search run
>> project macros etc) what else would be missing?
>
> A Unix version for OSX would certainly not be command-line only. It
> would probably even have an IDLDE... only it would be a Unix/X-Windows
> program, so it would look more like a program running on Solaris or
> Linux, and would otherwise be dissimilar from programs running under
> Aqua.

But on the other hand, you'd be able to take advantage of the best IDL
development environment available anywhere, called idlwave, no??

--

Stein Vidar Hagfors Haugan
ESA SOHO SOC/European Space Agency Science Operations Coordinator for SOHO

NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Email: shaugan@esa.nascom.nasa.gov
Mail Code 682.3, Bld. 26, Room G-1, Tel.: 1-301-286-9028/240-354-6066
Greenbelt, Maryland 20771, USA. Fax: 1-301-286-0264

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [John-David T. Smith](#) on Thu, 18 Oct 2001 14:43:04 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Stein Vidar Hagfors Haugan wrote:

>
> JD Smith <jdsmith@astro.cornell.edu> writes:
>
>> "Bernard K." wrote:
>>>
>>> I am not familiar with command line IDL on Unix implementations. Could
>>> someone elaborate a bit more on what an Aqua-less IDL would probably
>>> look like? Just a command line tool that would resemble using the
>>> actual command line in IDL for OS9? Apart from loosing the IDL
>>> developper environment and its associated menus (file edit search run
>>> project macros etc) what else would be missing?
>>
>> A Unix version for OSX would certainly not be command-line only. It
>> would probably even have an IDLDE... only it would be a Unix/X-Windows

>> program, so it would look more like a program running on Solaris or
>> Linux, and would otherwise be dissimilar from programs running under
>> Aqua.
>
> But on the other hand, you'd be able to take advantage of the best IDL
> development environment available anywhere, called idlwave, no??

I didn't want to browbeat, but, yes. Traditionally, the Mac market would probably reject something with an Emacs interface, but then again, wasn't I just arguing that the traditional Mac market is not what would fuel IDL MacOSX sales?

As a side note, I long ago asked RSI developers if the OSX version being developed would have a command-line only version available, and the answer was yes. So, it could have been the best of both worlds.

JD

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [Rob.Preece](#) on Thu, 18 Oct 2001 17:00:06 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

I will jump in here and add a few cents worth of comments. We have IDL installed on most platforms one could think of; my main development platform is my iBook but I had been planning to move over to my dual-processor G4 running OSX (sigh). The Linux version of IDL (which would most resemble the proposed port) is quite workable and the X interface is based on the window manager one is running. There are some nice ones out there (including Gnome!) that have been ported to OSX and are available via fink. In fact, this is the primary benefit of OSX being based upon BSD unix. I have had terrible luck getting my IDL software to print from the Linux version, but ymmv. I worry most about symmetric multiprocessing and AltiVec support from the IDL BSD unix port (I had hoped to blow away all my Linux friends with OSX benchmarks).

Bottom line: if RSI is serious about this port, then I support it and will reconsider cancelling my maintenance.

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [Paul Woodford](#) on Sun, 21 Oct 2001 02:56:48 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

In article <9qiq2d\$jqg\$1@news.doit.wisc.edu>,
"Liam Gumley" <Liam.Gumley@ssec.wisc.edu> wrote:

- > Any comment from the community on whether this suggestion would meet
- > the needs of Mac OS X users? (That is, an OS X version of IDL that
- > uses X-Windows for direct/object graphics and user interface).

I haven't yet decided.

- > Granted, you don't get the fancy Aqua user interface, but do IDL
- > programmers really care, as long IDL is running on their Mac?

Yes. Or at least I do.

- > For cross-platform development purposes, I would think a more
- > UNIX-like version for the Mac would be a good thing.

No, it wouldn't. For cross-platform development purposes, RSI needs to support the native interface of each system. In my opinion, they have done a fairly good job of making sure widgets look alright on all the platforms. IDLDE is another story. The Linux IDLDE has some annoying bugs and is kind of clunky. I appreciate the power of idlwave, but I greatly dislike emacs - the finger gymnastics, ugly GUI, etc.

The Macintosh IDLDE was obviously written by someone who cared about the interface and understood Mac users. That's one of the reasons why RSI's decision is so disappointing. The most persuasive reason for accepting an ugly hybrid is to keep the camel's nose in the tent.

I'm holding onto my maintenance dollars for now.

Paul

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [Struan Gray](#) on Tue, 23 Oct 2001 07:40:14 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Paul Woodford, cpwoodford@spamcop.net writes:

- > The Macintosh IDLDE was obviously written by
- > someone who cared about the interface and
- > understood Mac users. That's one of the
- > reasons why RSI's decision is so disappointing.

I agree. IDL on the Mac has its quirks, but it didn't feel like an ugly port, which is important for some of the people who use my programs.

I've written my letter to RSI, re-hashing many of the points made in this and other threads. I'm not a big user, but I have been an IDL

evangelist and I still think IDL has advantages over the mish-mash of programs and code libraries I'll probably replace it with. I'm sad to have to swap, but for me and my users cross-platform compatibility was the only thing that made IDL truly stand out from its competitors.

Those competitors are actively courting me. Perhaps I just feel extra warm and fuzzy because I'm on the IDL rebound, but significant price reductions for academic users and help with porting from IDL-trained technicians are not to be sniffed at.

> I'm holding onto my maintenance dollars for now.

Me too. I will use IDL 5.5 with pleasure, but active programming is suspended for the duration, and the ION-based teaching project I just finished the grant application for is headed for the dustbin. My impression is that RSI is more interested in servicing its few large customers than using people like me to kick-start interest in IDL among new users. So be it.

Struan

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [Logan Lindquist](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 16:02:37 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

"Wolf Schweitzer" <wuff@swisswuff.ch> wrote in message
news:3BD678DC.9050505@swisswuff.ch...

> To me, there is a misconception that some people assume we are using
> Macs because of their "cutsy" interface and that can be "over" now.

The graphic user interface between different operating systems is only a tool used to created by different companies to allow you to perform work and create things using the hardware that is available to that particular system. The major debate over the GUI's does not really matter when the hardware aspect is not considered. THE CAUSE OF THE MAC OS VS PC OS DEBATE IS BASED SOLELY ON WHAT GUI YOU ARE MOST FAMILAR WITH. That is all that should be considered. How quickly can you get the work you need to get done on a particluar operating system is based on previous amount of time spent using that operating system IN ADDITION TO WHAT HARDWARE YOU MACHINE HAS.

> An important advantage for IDL on Macintosh is its ability to do
> parameter-passing with Applescript. In order to understand the
> usefulness of that you need to know what other applications also do
> Applescript on a Mac OS.

This is a true statement, as you can see...

IDL 5.5 Functional Summary
Development & Programming Tools
Macintosh AppleScript support

This is also supported under a windows enviroment.

IDL 5.5 Functional Summary
Development & Programming Tools
Callable Windows DLL
ActiveX control (dual interface)

- > As Applescript would not sell without Mac OS and we are all happy it's
- > also part of Mac OS X, I think that IDL would need to be shipped with
- > Mac OS X - it is just an essential ingredient for the scientific
- > Macintosh community.

I do not know the details of porting stuff that has been written for Linux over to OS X but I wouldn't image that they would be much different, since OS X is based on a Linux kernel. IDL already supports Linux on Alpha's and x86. So the real question is if they already have a compilation that is somewhat similar, and there is enough support to figure out the details of porting the x86 Linux or the Alpha Linux over to OS X, why not start an open sourced development of such?

I just went and reviewed what the VP of RSI said about this issue.

"> > Now for the good news. In subsequent discussions with Apple they have made
>> us aware of a commercial X-Windows library for OS X. We are in the
> process
>> of evaluating it for use in a native Unix/X-Windows implementation of IDL
>> and ENVI for the Mac OS X platform. This would solve many technical
> issues
>> for us and allow us to continue to support the Macintosh platform both
>> natively and profitably, as it would leverage off our other Unix/X
>> platforms. The only thing this does not accomplish is providing IDL with
a
>> new Aqua UI and widget set."

So it looks like the big gripe that many of you have is unfounded, because RSI can't afford to pay a graphic artist/computer scientist to redesign the GUI of IDL OR they don't want to change the look because of IDL is a professional product. Thus the redesign would make the interface less professional looking. At least they are considering porting to OS X. It all then comes down to a usability issue. OS X users would have to get used to a slightly different interface. I suggest stop complaining and wait to see they decide to support it.

Their business people are looking at the financial information related to how many Mac users buy or renew licenses each year. The decision so far seems to be a preliminary one. Business people will change their mind if it is deemed profitable for the company.

About the pricing. If everyone would remember back to economics, the quantity/demand curves and the price/cost curves will give us some useful tool to analyze their decisions.

Since it's software the quantity/demand curve operate a bit differently. Easy to produce once the code exists. The amount of demand gives us some idea of why it costs so much. I agree that they should reconsider their pricing structure for educational software[increase demand - lower prices], but I also think they are doing a good job of targeting the specific group of students that is mostly likely to use the language in the business environment. When compared to mathematical programs such as MatLab or Mathematica, I think that those are better targeted towards Math majors. I haven't used either extensively. The trick is to get future users to become familiar with the language. You do not do this by limiting the number of copies that an institution can buy. These future users will hopefully equal future dollars spent once they graduate and get a job. I am an example! It would be helpful if someone who actually bought an educational version to contribute to the price range we are talking about.

That's all I have to say for now. It's lunch time and I'm hungry,

Logan Lindquist

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [stevens](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 18:02:41 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

In <9r6ob0\$6ot\$1@sulawesi-fi.lerc.nasa.gov>, Logan Lindquist:

[Snip...]

> I do not know the details of porting stuff that has been written for Linux

> over to OS X but I wouldn't image that they would be much different, since
> OS X is based on a Linux kernel.

Not Linux...FreeBSD. Both *nix, of course, but ports 'twixt *nix is not a walk in the park, generally. Then there's the whole zealotry thing in porting GUIs between *nixen and their distribution sets. For a while it seemed as if some Linux diehards would go to war over Gnome vs. KDE for crying out loud. Enough of this GUI jihad especially proprietary; where the heck is the science and visualization stuff?

Actually, these kernels don't need any GUI (even *nix's X) to operate.

Now, it's true there is considerable experience porting X among *nix.

Speaking for myself Aqua's just another GUI. If RSI would rather modify standard X toolkits and build a low(er)cost IDL port, go for it. I will use any X interface they might finally offer mainly since beggars can't be choosers. Having cut my teeth on Linux in a world infested with dumb ideas like proprietary Winmodems, I'm happy when any vendor makes these efforts to port functionality to "niche" environments like OS-X.

[Snip...]

> seems to be a preliminary one. Business people will change their mind if it
> is deemed profitable for the company.

There's two sets of cashflow interest here: RSI, and Apple. But there's not a lot RSI can do in pitching itself as a Gnu charity to Apple. They are on their own here, and Apple certainly has bigger fish to fry.

If it won't include Aqua (i.e., Apple proprietary) there's hardly a way Apple can make money. Gnu is mainly about choice, and only peripherally somebody's cashflow problems. Then there's the whole FUD scene in which Macroslop screams bloody murder about Gnu "contamination" when all that proprietary codebase (like a lot of Apple) "comingles" with Gnu. That's enough reason to keep legions of attack lawyers licking their chops, if only in the service of ignorant, unrestrained avarice. Get the pix?

Stallman might say, Gnu is not here to make Apple and RSI (etc.) money.

> About the pricing. If everyone would remember back to economics, the
> quantity/demand curves and the price/cost curves will give us some useful
> tool to analyze their decisions.

[Snip...]

Then please consider X toolkits and Gnu may not be Aqua, but just about the only way RSI can afford IDL-anything for OS-X (or Macs, period) and

"keep the dream alive" as some might say.

--

Regards, Weird (Harold Stevens) * IMPORTANT EMAIL INFO FOLLOWS *
Pardon the bogus email domain (dseg etc.) in place for spambots.
Stevens at sc45[.]rsc{period}raytheon(dot)com. *DO NOT SPAM IT.*
Standard Disclaimer: These are my opinions not Raytheon Company.

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [John-David T. Smith](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 18:56:42 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

"Harold Stevens US.972.952.3293" wrote:

>
> In <9r6ob0\$6ot\$1@sulawesi-fi.lerc.nasa.gov>, Logan Lindquist:
>
> [Snip...]
>
>> I do not know the details of porting stuff that has been written for Linux
>> over to OS X but I wouldn't image that they would be much different, since
>> OS X is based on a Linux kernel.
>
> Not Linux...FreeBSD. Both *nix, of course, but ports 'twixt *nix is not
> a walk in the park, generally. Then there's the whole zealotry thing in
> porting GUIs between *nixen and their distribution sets. For a while it
> seemed as if some Linux diehards would go to war over Gnome vs. KDE for
> crying out loud. Enough of this GUI jihad especially proprietary; where
> the heck is the science and visualization stuff?
>
> Actually, these kernels don't need any GUI (even *nix's X) to operate.
>
> Now, it's true there is considerable experience porting X among *nix.
>
> Speaking for myself Aqua's just another GUI. If RSI would rather modify
> standard X toolkits and build a low(er)cost IDL port, go for it. I will
> use any X interface they might finally offer mainly since beggars can't
> be choosers. Having cut my teeth on Linux in a world infested with dumb
> ideas like proprietary Winmodems, I'm happy when any vendor makes these
> efforts to port functionality to "niche" environments like OS-X.

I think the most important side-effects of dropping the native OSX version are being completely missed here. I am perfectly comfortable with the X/Motif widgets, which I use everyday... especially since I don't use IDLDE. I suspect most IDL users on OSX would not balk terribly at the foreign-looking interface (inferior as it may be).

The bigger trouble lies under the hood. IDL for MacOSX had some significant optimizations for display and within the core engine itself which are being tossed out with the bath water. The display speed will suffer, since in effect you're running through *two* levels of display (the X level, which translates drawing commands into the native display level). Any use of the much-improved OpenGL OS/hardware support will be impossible. The powerful AltiVec tuning already accomplished or planned for the OSX version will not be included.

Here's a small sampling of a feature table comparison, far from complete:

+=====+		
IDL feature comparison	OSX Native	OSX Straight Unix Port
+=====+		
Interface	Aqua	X/Motif (server required)
Display Speed	Fast	Slow
3D/OpenGL Optimization	Yes	No
AltiVec Vectorization	Complete	None, or limited
Separate Core/IDE Threads	Yes	No
Pervasive PDF Output	Yes	No
+=====+		

The bottom line? If you don't care about a non-native interface, your worries aren't over. I welcome corrections to this table (especially by RSI).

I really do like the analogy made by Ron Syml: how would you Windows users like it if RSI told you they didn't want to support your system, and the "solution" was to run an X server with IDL for Unix; how would Unix users like it if they were dropped and told to run a bundled Windows emulation program on top of IDL for Windows? Somehow, I doubt you'd chalk it up to "it's just another GUI, what do I care?"

JD

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
 Posted by [Logan Lindquist](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 19:16:14 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Harold,

> Not Linux...FreeBSD. Both *nix, of course, but ports 'twixt *nix is not
 > a walk in the park, generally. Then there's the whole zealotry thing in

Interesting! I didn't know which Linux Release the X platform was based on. It took me a little while to figure out your *nix terminology. You are

referring to the word, Linux?

- > Speaking for myself Aqua's just another GUI. If RSI would rather modify
- > standard X toolkits and build a low(er)cost IDL port, go for it. I will

Yes hopefully RSI will release IDL for X. :)

- > There's two sets of cashflow interest here: RSI, and Apple. But there's

Not that the port of IDL will sell more new Apple stuff, but it will prevent IDL users who are not too pissed off and still want to use the language, from buying x86. RSI has to figure out cost of development divided by the project sales to X users [targeted at the correct market, not the general populace, but maybe marketing doesn't matter too much when looking for any sales that would allow for development to continue].

- > If it won't include Aqua (i.e., Apple proprietary) there's hardly a way
- > Apple can make money. Gnu is mainly about choice, and only peripherally

Apple should provide the utility Development utilities to a company as large as Kodak/RSI for FREE. Also look to my paragraph above for further motivation for Apple to keep its users from investing in x86.

I would like to thank you for you intelligent, thoughtful response. Not like other people that use this group.

Logan Lindquist

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [Logan Lindquist](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 19:31:29 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

- >> Not Linux...FreeBSD. Both *nix, of course, but ports 'twixt *nix is not
- >> a walk in the park, generally. Then there's the whole zealotry thing in

Unix! Of course, I knew of Linux's heritage. I had forgotten about the Unix version of IDL. I think I learned on version 4.0. I am not sure how the Unix version is handled, JD Smith seems to know more.

I wonder what the current version of the Unix IDL is, and if it works on the big 64-512 processor machines that SGI now manufactures. I bet that those would crunch numbers really fast.

My Win2k IDL release is fast enough for development. I have always wanted to build the equivalent of a one-two processor SGI machine by purchasing a very expensive graphics card [that works well in both Linux and Win2k], but of course the expenses has limited my interests in that area.

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [stevens](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 20:00:14 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

In <3BD70EEA.ECF66A21@astro.cornell.edu>, JD Smith:

[Snip...]

> I really do like the analogy made by Ron Syml: how would you Windows
> users

Correction: I do not use a single piece of Macroslop ever, with the single exception of my yearly review. The pointyhairs INSIST it be done with that satanic abomination called MS-Word, and so I oblige them, only as it seems a condition of my employment. I'm composing this on an NCD Xterm with slrn on a Sun Enterprise, manage the department's Turbolinux webserver, and use a SuSE Linux PC on the table next to me. Windows user? Hah! NEVER! :)

> like it if RSI told you they didn't want to support your system,
> and the "solution" was to run an X server with IDL for Unix; how would
> Unix users like it if they were dropped and told to run a bundled
> Windows emulation program on top of IDL for Windows?

As long as I have some options other than Windows? Like Linux or Mac? Then I don't care. Really. I go find the tools to get the job done, and (as the point above) select them whenever possible mostly on the basis of personal utility and a sense of principles. It involves very little misplaced ardor or cowed unthinking acceptance, I believe. Yearly review excepted. :)

That is NOT to say I like the RSI headfake recently on IDL OS-X ports, and I actually looked forward to the Aqua port. Seriously.

But that's just not gonna happen, so I gotta make lemonade from lemons.

> Somehow, I doubt
> you'd chalk it up to "it's just another GUI, what do I care?"

Actually, yes, unless *speed* is absolutely crippled. Then I get bent. I'm a radar simulations kinda guy, not a wiredup eyecandy goober. If RSI ports IDL to OS-X using something X, I'm won't throw baby out with bathwater, on the sole basis of a disputed pedigree.

[Snip...]

--

Regards, Weird (Harold Stevens) * IMPORTANT EMAIL INFO FOLLOWS *
Pardon the bogus email domain (dseg etc.) in place for spambots.
Stevens at [sc45\[.\]rsc{period}raytheon\(dot\)com](mailto:sc45[.]rsc{period}raytheon(dot)com). *DO NOT SPAM IT.*

Standard Disclaimer: These are my opinions not Raytheon Company.

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [Liam E. Gumley](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 20:01:57 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

JD Smith wrote:

[stuff deleted]

> The bigger trouble lies under the hood. IDL for MacOSX had some
> significant optimizations for display and within the core engine itself
> which are being tossed out with the bath water. The display speed will
> suffer, since in effect you're running through *two* levels of display
> (the X level, which translates drawing commands into the native display
> level). Any use of the much-improved OpenGL OS/hardware support will be
> impossible. The powerful AltiVec tuning already accomplished or planned
> for the OSX version will not be included.

>
> Here's a small sampling of a feature table comparison, far from
> complete:

>
> +=====+
> IDL feature comparison OSX Native OSX Straight Unix Port
> +=====+
> Interface Aqua X/Motif (server required)
> Display Speed Fast Slow
> 3D/OpenGL Optimization Yes No
> AltiVec Vectorization Complete None, or limited
> Separate Core/IDE Threads Yes No
> Pervasive PDF Output Yes No
> +=====+

Please correct me if I'm wrong, but I don't see why the display speed would suffer.

If I run IDL locally on an SGI console then it's the same issue, right? That is, IDL direct graphics are translated from the X level into the native display level. I've never had any complaints with display speed in this mode. In fact, most of the time I run IDL on a remote UNIX host while sitting in front of a PC running Exceed, and even then I don't have major complaints about the display speed of direct graphics (which admittedly is network bandwidth limited).

Cheers,
Liam.
Practical IDL Programming
<http://www.gumley.com/>

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 20:21:55 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Liam E. Gumley (Liam.Gumley@ssec.wisc.edu) writes:

> In fact, most of the time I run IDL on a remote UNIX host
> while sitting in front of a PC running Exceed, and even then I don't
> have major complaints about the display speed of direct graphics (which
> admittedly is network bandwidth limited).

Clearly you are not rotating object graphics surfaces
in three dimensions. :-)

Cheers,

David

--

David W. Fanning, Ph.D.
Fanning Software Consulting
Phone: 970-221-0438, E-mail: david@dfanning.com
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>
Toll-Free IDL Book Orders: 1-888-461-0155

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [John-David T. Smith](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 20:46:18 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

"Liam E. Gumley" wrote:

>
> JD Smith wrote:
> [stuff deleted]
>> The bigger trouble lies under the hood. IDL for MacOSX had some
>> significant optimizations for display and within the core engine itself
>> which are being tossed out with the bath water. The display speed will
>> suffer, since in effect you're running through *two* levels of display
>> (the X level, which translates drawing commands into the native display
>> level). Any use of the much-improved OpenGL OS/hardware support will be
>> impossible. The powerful AltiVec tuning already accomplished or planned
>> for the OSX version will not be included.
>>
>> Here's a small sampling of a feature table comparison, far from
>> complete:
>>
>> +=====+
>> IDL feature comparison OSX Native OSX Straight Unix Port
>> +=====+

```

>> Interface           Aqua      X/Motif (server required)
>> Display Speed       Fast      Slow
>> 3D/OpenGL Optimization  Yes      No
>> AltiVec Vectorization Complete  None, or limited
>> Separate Core/IDE Threads Yes      No
>> Pervasive PDF Output  Yes      No
>> +=====+
>
> Please correct me if I'm wrong, but I don't see why the display speed
> would suffer.

```

I'll put a fine point on it: running the RSI-supplied `graphics_times3` benchmark on a native OSX vs. a X11-based IDL would reveal the former to be much faster than the latter. This is a direct result of layering two display devices one atop another (which is different from your SGI, for which X11 is the native drawing layer).

You could demonstrate this to yourself quite convincingly by running `graphics_times3` in your IDL version running in an X-emulator under Windows, and on the Windows version directly. I think you'll find the latter to be a good deal faster.

This may not be a *practical* limit for what you do, but certainly could impact others with more display-taxing applications.

A similar story could be told for core routine performance and lack of AltiVec tuning. Unless RSI is hiding a miracle up their sleeve, "IDL OSX--" will be noticeably slower in both display and computation than the aborted IDL OSX. Of course, we may never know the difference.

JD

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
 Posted by [stevens](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 21:21:33 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

In <9r73m1\$bck\$1@sulawesi-fi.lerc.nasa.gov>, Logan Lindquist:

[Apologies for a lot of intertwined snippage...]

```

> Interesting! I didn't know which Linux Release the X platform was based on.
> It took me a little while to figure out your *nix terminology. You are
> referring to the word, Linux?

```

Sorry; I was misleading and presumptive. Actually, "*nix" is kinda shorthand for any variant/clone of Unix (Irix, AIX, Linux) and not just Linux alone.

As for X, it's not really Unix in that it developed alongside Unix, but from an independent source ("Open Group" at one time, IIRC). It's just the GUI or windowing system that grew up with the variants of Unix, and so the de facto standard in that regard.

X and *nix ain't always pretty; it's ABM, and it gets the job done for me.

> Yes hopefully RSI will release IDL for X. :)

As I said elsewhere, for the realists, it's lemonade from lemons time. :)

> Not that the port of IDL will sell more new Apple stuff, but it will prevent
> IDL users who are not too pissed off and still want to use the language,

I dunno. Seems like a lot of IDL-Aqua or Bust sentiment lately. :)

Seriously, I think it would be a shame if RSI drops OS-X ports, but for very different reasons than just: "RSI is greedy/stupid/incompetent/malicious" or all of that. We do have Macroslop, afterall. :)

> populace, but maybe marketing doesn't matter too much when looking for any
> sales that would allow for development to continue].

This is my point: I'm an engineer. The marketeers can toast in Hades, for my part. I want reliable, speedy, affordable visualization tools. Even if it is back to Gnuplot for me, as Macroslop tries to jam XP, .NET and Passport down our collective throats. There is a bigger issue here than our pet OS/GUI.

> Apple should provide the utility Development utilities to a company as large
> as Kodak/RSI for FREE.

Easy for you to say. Own any Kodak common stock? :)

> I would like to thank you for you intelligent, thoughtful response. Not like
> other people that use this group.

Give 'em a chance; there are a lot of very nice, helpful folks here. Really.

--

Regards, Weird (Harold Stevens) * IMPORTANT EMAIL INFO FOLLOWS *
Pardon the bogus email domain (dseg etc.) in place for spambots.
Stevens at sc45[.]rsc{period}raytheon(dot)com. *DO NOT SPAM IT.*
Standard Disclaimer: These are my opinions not Raytheon Company.

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering

JD

Thanks for assembling this comparison. This is the kind of meat-and-potatoes information I have been lacking. The numerical performance issue is a weighty one; that's not to diminish the importance of the native interface and display speed/rendering. I don't want to ask you to compare apples and oranges, but (I will anyway) how do you think the numerical performance of a Unix port of IDL to OS X will compare to that we currently see in IDL on the G4 under OS 9? When we switched from Unix IDL to Mac, I was blown away by the performance increase... will I be blown 'back' to the slower performance?

Ben

JD Smith wrote:

> "Liam E. Gumley" wrote:

>>

>> JD Smith wrote:

>> [stuff deleted]

>>> The bigger trouble lies under the hood. IDL for MacOSX had some
>>> significant optimizations for display and within the core engine itself
>>> which are being tossed out with the bath water. The display speed will
>>> suffer, since in effect you're running through *two* levels of display
>>> (the X level, which translates drawing commands into the native display
>>> level). Any use of the much-improved OpenGL OS/hardware support will be
>>> impossible. The powerful AltiVec tuning already accomplished or planned
>>> for the OSX version will not be included.

>>>

>>> Here's a small sampling of a feature table comparison, far from
>>> complete:

>>>

>>> +=====+
>>> IDL feature comparison OSX Native OSX Straight Unix Port
>>> +=====+
>>> Interface Aqua X/Motif (server required)
>>> Display Speed Fast Slow
>>> 3D/OpenGL Optimization Yes No
>>> AltiVec Vectorization Complete None, or limited
>>> Separate Core/IDE Threads Yes No
>>> Pervasive PDF Output Yes No
>>> +=====+

>>

>> Please correct me if I'm wrong, but I don't see why the display speed
>> would suffer.

>

> I'll put a fine point on it: running the RSI-supplied graphics_times3

> benchmark on a native OSX vs. a X11-based IDL would reveal the former to
> be much faster than the latter. This is a direct result of layering two
> display devices one atop another (which is different from your SGI, for
> which X11 is the native drawing layer).
>
> You could demonstrate this to yourself quite convincingly by running
> graphics_times3 in your IDL version running in an X-emulator under
> Windows, and on the Windows version directly. I think you'll find the
> latter to be a good deal faster.
>
> This may not be a *practical* limit for what you do, but certainly could
> impact others with more display-taxing applications.
>
> A similar story could be told for core routine performance and lack of
> AltiVec tuning. Unless RSI is hiding a miracle up their sleeve, "IDL
> OSX--" will be noticeably slower in both display and computation than
> the aborted IDL OSX. Of course, we may never know the difference.
>
> JD

--

Ben Tupper
180 Mckown Point Road
West Boothbay Harbor, ME 04575

email: btupper@bigelow.org
telephone: (207) 633-9600

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [Dennis Boccippio](#) on Thu, 25 Oct 2001 15:55:21 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

In article <3BD826E9.F60CB501@bigelow.org>,
Ben Tupper <btupper@bigelow.org> wrote:

> JD
>
> Thanks for assembling this comparison. This is the kind of meat-and-potatoes
> information I have been lacking. The numerical performance issue is a
> weighty
> one; that's not to diminish the importance of the native interface and
> display
> speed/rendering. I don't want to ask you to compare apples and oranges, but
> (I
> will anyway) how do you think the numerical performance of a Unix port of IDL
> to
> OS X will compare to that we currently see in IDL on the G4 under OS 9? When

> we
 > switched from Unix IDL to Mac, I was blown away by the performance
 > increase...
 > will I be blown 'back' to the slower performance?
 >
 > Ben
 >

Numerical performance aside, from the 'beggars can't be choosers' front,
 compare the following:

```
+=====+
large jobs monopolize CPU
-----
  OS-9: almost entirely (despite decent RSI and MacOS progress)
  OS-X: almost negligibly
+=====+

+=====+
CLI/shells allow efficient management/preprocessing of data files
-----
  OS-9: difficult (Applescript or 3rd party shell tools required)
  OS-X: trivial (and flexible) Un*x
+=====+
```

These two issues alone are the reason my MacOS license is used only for
 short/interactive jobs and code development, while my meaty jobs are run
 on IRIX licenses. They have nothing to do with OS-X nativization of the
 IDL code itself.

The short form: what I **want** is:

- The ability to store, manage and preprocess many large data files
inexpensively on one machine. OS-X/shells with banks of Firewire
 drives give me this.
 (other Un*x solutions give me shells but storage and maintenance are
 expensive, Linux aside)
- The ability to develop analysis code efficiently and comfortably.
 IDL/OS-X with the DE and profiler give me this.
 (any IDL platform gives me this)
- The ability to batch process these data files without dragging the
 machine to a halt. IDL/OS-X gives me this.
 (any IDL platform but OS-9 gives me this. [Windoze?])
- The ability to postprocess the results for visualization and sharing

efficiently on the same machine. (For me, Noesys, Quicktime, MediaCleaner, Acrobat and/or <gasp> even iMovie/iDVD give me this) (no other platform gives me this functionality the way I want it)

- The ability to create presentations, slides, papers, multimedia demos, etc on the same machine using the tools I want (Director, Powerpoint, TeX, Acrobat, Illustrator, etc.)
(Windoze could give me this, I guess.)
- The ability to serve out results from the same machine using standard/ "safe" tools (like Apache) and access them from home (like ssh)
(any Un*x solution could give me this)

Yes, I know, I can (and do) do all this by using multiple platforms. I can even do some of this less effectively using a variety of shareware or GNU tools on one platform (appease the Linux folks). I've tried that option and it always comes up short; the tools just aren't up to snuff compared with commercial solutions in the Mac/Windoze world. None of my needs (not necessarily representative, granted) require significant G4/OS-X/Aqua nativization of IDL. Would it be nice, yes, but critical, no. YMMV. I'm almost certain that any cost or productivity losses incurrant by non-G4-optimized or non-Aquafied OS-X/IDL would be more than offset by consolidating my current multi-platform approach to a single-platform solution...

- Dennis Boccippio, NASA/MSFC SD-60

Subject: Re: Message From RSI VP of Engineering
Posted by [Pavel A. Romashkin](#) on Thu, 25 Oct 2001 16:11:34 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

I am sure you will miss the DE that you are used to. I can't stand the DE under Unix, sorry. If the performance will be what it is like on our HP-UX, I will not even try the OSX version.

Pavel

Ben Tupper wrote:

- >
- > JD
- >
- > Thanks for assembling this comparison. This is the kind of meat-and-potatoes
- > information I have been lacking. The numerical performance issue is a weighty
- > one; that's not to diminish the importance of the native interface and display
- > speed/rendering. I don't want to ask you to compare apples and oranges, but (I
- > will anyway) how do you think the numerical performance of a Unix port of IDL to
- > OS X will compare to that we currently see in IDL on the G4 under OS 9? When we

> switched from Unix IDL to Mac, I was blown away by the performance increase...
> will I be blown 'back' to the slower performance?
>
> Ben
