RSI CEO Open Letter To Our Macintosh Customers
October 16, 2001

As CEO of Research Systems Inc., I would like to clarify our recent
announcement regarding our discontinuation of support for the Macintosh
platform, specifically Mac OS X, and respond to many of the concerns being
raised by those affected. Let me begin by apologizing for the roundabout
method that this announcement was communicated. Our plan was to mail a
letter to each customer with our new IDL 5.5 release, which is on its way
right now. However, due to unexpected delays from our mailing house, these
were delayed and some information appeared inadvertently on our Website
before the letters were received. Our intent was never to not directly
inform our customers of this important change or to try to "hide" this
information. We know this change in our platform support policy is deeply
distressing to some of you and creates some problems for you and your
research activities. For this we are truly sorry.

We believe the Macintosh platform and the new Mac OS X operating system are
excellent and important technology. We also understand the special
importance the Mac has to its users. We have a strong relationship with
Apple and have been committed to supporting the Mac since the inception of
IDL on that platform 8 years ago. We were eagerly anticipating the benefits
of the new Mac OS X functionality for IDL and had invested significant money
and resources into its development. Unfortunately, the realities of business
don't always go the way you want them to or even the way of doing the "right
thing".

Despite our best intentions and commitment, the hard facts of our revenue
from the Mac platform combined with the high cost of supporting OS X with a
separate code base led to the decision that going forward with the Mac OS X
release would not only be unprofitable for RSI, it would jeopardize the
quality of support for our core platforms. As much as we would like to
provide this release to our customers we would not be acting in a
responsible manner of sustaining a viable business for our customers and
shareholders.

We are currently evaluating the possibility of providing support in IDL for
both a Mac Classic format (OS 9 running on OS X) and/or a native
Unix/X-Windows implementation on Mac OS X. Once we have determined the
feasibility of each of these options we will let you know what we can do
going forward.

For our customers who are currently on maintenance, we will honor your
maintenance contracts and allow you to transfer your IDL Mac licenses to one

of our supported platforms at no charge. Please contact your maintenance reps for information and assistance in doing this. They can be reached at info@rsinc.com or 303-786-9900.

I want to also address other questions that have been raised by you regarding this announcement:
- This decision was not due to Kodak's acquisition of RSI. They were completely uninvolved in the decision-making process.
- RSI is not dropping IDL development. It will remain a critical part of our product offering for years to come.
- We conducted a thorough examination of our Mac installed base and the prospective OS X market and are aware of the potential for growth of the Mac platform due to OS X.
- We will follow the success of Mac OS X and if Apple's market share does increase significantly within our potential customer base to the point that supporting it would be financially feasible for us, we would be willing to consider re-adopting support for the Mac.
- We have communicated with Apple during our decision process and will continue to do so.
- We cannot distribute, even in beta form, the IDL OS X code that has been developed due to licensing issues.

I hope that I have been able to answer some of your questions and to help you understand what our thought process was in this matter. If you have any additional questions for RSI, please direct them to our PR Manager, Matthew Powell, at mpowell@rsinc.com or 303-413-3906.

Thank you.

Respectfully,
Mike Scally
CEO & President
Research Systems Inc.

Subject: Re: RSI CEO Open Letter To Our Macintosh Customers
Posted by Randall Skelton on Wed, 17 Oct 2001 07:26:06 GMT
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On Tue, 16 Oct 2001, Matthew Powell wrote:

> RSI CEO Open Letter To Our Macintosh Customers
> October 16, 2001

[snip]

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> separate code base led to the decision that going forward with the Mac OS X
> release would not only be unprofitable for RSI, it would jeopardize the
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> provide this release to our customers we would not be acting in a
> responsible manner of sustaining a viable business for our customers and
> shareholders.

This leaves me weary about the support for other OS's... What are the
'hard facts of revenue' for some of the other *nix platforms? Admittedly,
support for Linux, IRIX, Solaris, HPUX, and AIX, doesn't require as
significant a re-development as Mac OS X (aqua) does. Nevertheless, I
wonder if all the other OSs are truly profitable. Will we all be
expected to migrate to WindowsXP over the next 2 years? At the bottom of
this letter, a number of myths were dispelled... the one which was left
out was whether RSI will be dropping other 'unprofitable' platforms in
the near future...

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> both a Mac Classic format (OS 9 running on OS X) and/or a native
> Unix/X-Windows implementation on Mac OS X. Once we have determined the
> feasibility of each of these options we will let you know what we can do
> going forward.

A classic version of IDL will not do it for me... I want to be able to use
*nix features and *nix shared libraries. Tying IDL to applescript on OS X
would be a bad idea. In Mr. Cooke's letter he commented on using a
commercial Xwindows library to port to OS X. This is fine by me but I do
hope they are also testing with the XFree libraries.

Last week IDL for the Mac looked to be dead while now it merely looks
uncertain-- I don't really know which is better.

Cheers,
Randall

Subject: Re: RSI CEO Open Letter To Our Macintosh Customers
Posted by Mark Hadfield on Wed, 17 Oct 2001 21:03:42 GMT
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From: "Randall Skelton" <rhskelto@atm.ox.ac.uk>
> On Tue, 16 Oct 2001, Matthew Powell wrote:
>
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>> October 16, 2001
>
> [snip]
>

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>
> This leaves me weary about the support for other OS's... What
> are the 'hard facts of revenue' for some of the other *nix platforms?

My thoughts exactly.

> Admittedly,
> support for Linux, IRIX, Solaris, HPUX, and AIX, doesn't require as
> significant a re-development as Mac OS X (aqua) does.

No, but neither does support for Digital Unix (or whatever they call it
these days) and they've dropped that.

Mark Hadfield
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