
Subject: which *nix will RSI nix next?

Posted by [Richard French](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 00:13:05 GMT

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I am still stunned by RSI's decision to cut out so many established UNIX platforms. I noticed in the 5.5 release that, not only is Alpha True64 ending up in the trash can (so much for all of us old DEC users who have relied on IDL for a decade), but IBM unix stations are being 'considered' for possible sacrifice next time around (at least, that is how I read their statement).

Loss of cross-platform compatibility is one big loss, of course, but another is the fear that whatever choice one makes for a replacement to an abandoned flavor of UNIX will be the next one on RSI's list of unprofitable systems. They want to concentrate on their 'core constituents' but they don't give any indication of which system they consider their highest priority. Do any of you want to invest \$10K in a new firebreathing commercial workstation from Sun, only to find in three years that RSI doesn't think it is sufficiently profitable to stay on the select list of supported systems?

I've been using IDL for work on the NASA Cassini mission to Saturn. I've been telling my colleagues for years that its great strength is that IDL code is portable across operating systems. So much for that argument. I think we will have to change to MATLAB, much as I don't want to.

I wish there were a way to get a straight answer on this from RSI. It is a serious question. I am deeply disappointed.

Dick French
Astronomy Dept
Wellesley College.

Subject: Re: which *nix will RSI nix next?

Posted by [Richard Cooke](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 15:01:23 GMT

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Not to worry, IDL will not turn its back on its cross platform roots. AIX has strong following in Europe and we are working closely with IBM to ensure continued support for IDL on this platform. We are also very close to finishing our investigation of whether or not we can provide a unix/x-windows implementation for Mac OS X (which looks promising at the moment) that will allow us to continue to economically support the Macintosh platform. Don't read too much into this situation. Unix platforms by and large are fairly inexpensive to support. With Compaq's announcement that they are abandoning the Alpha chip we sort of saw the writing on the wall (aside from the fact that very few of our customers actually buy licenses for this platform). And remember also that the market demand for platforms will drive many of the decisions we all make about what we do and don't do going forward.

We are committed to finding a solution that works for our customers on the Mac, if we can just have a few more days to sort some things out I think we can come out with some positive news.

"Richard G. French" <rfrench@wellesley.edu> wrote in message news:3BD60799.191320B2@wellesley.edu...

> I am still stunned by RSI's decision to cut out
> so many established UNIX platforms. I noticed in
> the 5.5 release that, not only is Alpha True64
> ending up in the trash can (so much for all of
> us old DEC users who have relied on IDL for a
> decade), but IBM unix stations are being
> 'considered' for possible sacrifice next time
> around (at least, that is how I read their
> statement).

Subject: Re: which *nix will RSI nix next?

Posted by [Dennis Boccippio](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 15:58:56 GMT

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In article <9r6l4f\$lsr\$1@news.rsinc.com>,
"Richard Cooke" <rcooke@rsinc.com> wrote:

> <snip> Unix platforms by and
> large are fairly inexpensive to support.

Perhaps for RSI, but not so for the end-user :-)

- DJB

Subject: Re: which *nix will RSI nix next?

Posted by [Pavel A. Romashkin](#) on Thu, 25 Oct 2001 16:22:10 GMT

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Richard Cooke wrote:

>

> Not to worry, IDL will not turn its back on its cross platform roots.

Really ?! Didn't it already do that ?

Not exactly the way I view the recent news.

Pavel

Subject: Re: which *nix will RSI nix next?

Posted by [Stein Vidar Hagfors H\[1\]](#) on Thu, 25 Oct 2001 19:06:49 GMT

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"Richard Cooke" <rcooke@rsinc.com> writes:

> Not to worry, IDL will not turn its back on its cross platform roots. AIX
> has strong following in Europe and we are working closely with IBM to ensure
> continued support for IDL on this platform. We are also very close to
> finishing our investigation of whether or not we can provide a
> unix/x-windows implementation for Mac OS X (which looks promising at the
> moment) that will allow us to continue to economically support the Macintosh
> platform. Don't read too much into this situation. Unix platforms by and
> large are fairly inexpensive to support. With Compaq's announcement that
> they are abandoning the Alpha chip we sort of saw the writing on the wall
> (aside from the fact that very few of our customers actually buy licenses
> for this platform).

The question isn't so much the *Alpha* chip, but Tru64, which is bound to continue on the 64-bit Intel stuff that may look and feel slightly alpha-ish, given that they've acquired most of the Alpha development team.. no?

--

Stein Vidar Hagfors Haugan
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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: which *nix will RSI nix next?

Posted by [Joseph B. Gurman](#) on Mon, 29 Oct 2001 20:56:24 GMT

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In article <xmzbsivilo6.fsf@esa.nascom.nasa.gov>, Stein Vidar Hagfors Haugan <shaugan@esa.nascom.nasa.gov> wrote:

[snip]

>

> The question isn't so much the *Alpha* chip, but Tru64, which is bound to
> continue on the 64-bit Intel stuff that may look and feel slightly alpha-ish,
> given that they've acquired most of the Alpha development team.. no?

Sorry, Stein, but I think you've got it exactly wrong. A merged HP-Compaq, led by HP, has no need for Tru64 when HP has HP-UX, which is 64-bit as of version 11.0. Frankly, I think OpenVMS has a better chance of survival in HPAq than Tru64 does.

Come back in five years and the incorrect prognosticator can buy the correct a bottle of beer.

Joe

Subject: Re: which *nix will RSI nix next?

Posted by [Richard French](#) on Mon, 29 Oct 2001 21:50:36 GMT

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> Sorry, Stein, but I think you've got it exactly wrong. A merged
> HP-Compaq, led by HP, has no need for Tru64 when HP has HP-UX, which is
> 64-bit as of version 11.0. Frankly, I think OpenVMS has a better chance
> of survival in HPAq than Tru64 does.

>

> Come back in five years and the incorrect prognosticator can buy
> the correct a bottle of beer.

>

> Joe

I wrote to RSI support to voice my 'disappointment' in their decision to drop support for Tru64, as William Thompson also did. I never got an answer from RSI, which is yet another disappointment. I have been a fierce defender of IDL for more then a decade, but this latest news has really put me in a jam.

I did get an invitation from PV-WAVE (Visual Numerics) to convert my license to PV-WAVE. The letter had the interesting phrase:

"Cross-platform compatibility is a big concern, especially for existing customers. The time to consider commercial viability is before adding a platform to the supported list, not after you have customers."

Too bad that RSI did not follow that advice. Has anyone else gotten a response to a personal letter indicating unhappiness with their decision to drop Tru64 support?

Dick French

Subject: Re: which *nix will RSI nix next?
Posted by [K. Bowman](#) on Mon, 29 Oct 2001 22:29:59 GMT
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In article <3BDDCF0B.42C18BA3@wellesley.edu>, Richard G. French <rfrench@wellesley.edu> wrote:

> Too bad that RSI did not follow that advice. Has anyone else gotten
> a response to a personal letter indicating unhappiness with their
> decision to drop Tru64 support?

I have gotten no replies to either e-mails or snail-mails. What kind of shape is the company in?

I think I will get a Matlab or PV-WAVE license and install GrADS as purely defensive measures.

Ken

Subject: Re: which *nix will RSI nix next?
Posted by [Ken Mankoff](#) on Mon, 29 Oct 2001 22:39:30 GMT
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On Mon, 29 Oct 2001, K. Bowman wrote:

> In article <3BDDCF0B.42C18BA3@wellesley.edu>, Richard G. French
> <rfrench@wellesley.edu> wrote:

>
>> Too bad that RSI did not follow that advice. Has anyone else gotten
>> a response to a personal letter indicating unhappiness with their
>> decision to drop Tru64 support?

>
> I have gotten no replies to either e-mails or snail-mails. What kind
> of shape is the company in?

>

> I think I will get a Matlab or PV-WAVE license and install GrADS as
> purely defensive measures.
>

I got a very nice letter this morning from RSI. I never wrote to them about Tru64, but about the whole apple mac fiasco. I have deleted it so I cannot repost it here, but it explained much of what was "officially" posted to the NG:

checking commercial X packages,
checking the portability of add-on routines (HDF, etc)
notes that ENVI comes easy if everything else works
etc...

Company appears in good shape...

-k.

--

Ken Mankoff
LASP://303.492.3264
<http://lasp.colorado.edu/~mankoff/>

Subject: Re: which *nix will RSI nix next?
Posted by [Dennis Boccippio](#) on Tue, 30 Oct 2001 01:17:31 GMT
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In article
<Pine.LNX.4.33.0110291536400.32181-100000@snoe.colorado.edu>,
Ken Mankoff <mankoff@I.HATE.SPAM.cs.colorado.edu> wrote:

> I got a very nice letter this morning from RSI...<snip>... it explained much of what was
> "officially"
> posted to the NG:
> checking commercial X packages,
> checking the portability of add-on routines (HDF, etc)
> ...

well, the base HDF 4.1 libs compile fine on OS X with a minor patch, so hopefully that won't be a showstopper...

- DJB

Subject: Re: which *nix will RSI nix next?
Posted by [Francis Burton](#) on Tue, 30 Oct 2001 13:16:18 GMT

"K. Bowman" wrote:

> I have gotten no replies to either e-mails or snail-mails.

I received a short but courteous reply to my email directing me to look at their web page "as there are some further announcements on actions being taken".

Francis
