
Subject: Re: Other IDL / Mac advantages

Posted by [Logan Lindquist](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 16:02:07 GMT

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<DIV><FONT face=Arial size=2></FONT>&nbsp;</DIV>
<DIV><FONT face=Arial size=2>"Wolf Schweitzer" &lt;</FONT><A
href="mailto:wuff@swisswuff.ch"><FONT face=Arial
size=2>wuff@swisswuff.ch</FONT></A><FONT face=Arial size=2>&gt; wrote in message
</FONT><A href="news:3BD678DC.9050505@swisswuff.ch"><FONT face=Arial
size=2>news:3BD678DC.9050505@swisswuff.ch</FONT></A><FONT face=Arial
size=2>...</FONT></DIV>
<DIV><FONT face=Arial size=2>&gt; To me, there is a misconception that some
people assume we are using <BR>&gt; Macs because of their "cutsy" interface and
that can be "over" now.<BR></FONT></DIV>
<DIV><FONT face=Arial size=2>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
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PC OS DEBATE IS BASED SOLELY ON WHAT GUI YOU ARE MOST FAMILAR WITH. That is
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that operating system IN ADDITION TO WHAT HARDWARE YOU MACHINE HAS.
</FONT></DIV>
<DIV><FONT face=Arial size=2></FONT>&nbsp;</DIV>
<DIV><FONT face=Arial size=2>&gt; An important advantage for IDL on Macintosh is
its ability to do <BR>&gt; parameter-passing with Applescript. In order to
understand the <BR>&gt; usefulness of that you need to know what other
applications also do <BR>&gt; Applescript on a Mac OS.<BR></FONT></DIV>
<DIV><FONT face=Arial size=2></FONT>&nbsp;</DIV>
<DIV><FONT face=Arial size=2></FONT>&nbsp;</DIV>
<DIV><FONT face=Arial size=2>This is a true statement, as you can see...
</FONT></DIV>
<DIV><FONT face=Arial size=2></FONT>&nbsp;</DIV>
<DIV><FONT face=Arial size=2>*****</FONT></DIV>
<DIV><FONT face=Arial size=2><U><STRONG>IDL 5.5 Functional
Summary</STRONG></U></FONT></DIV>
<DIV><FONT face=Arial size=2><STRONG>Development & Programming
Tools</STRONG></FONT></DIV>
<DIV><FONT face=Arial size=2>Macintosh AppleScript support</FONT></DIV>
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<DIV>*****</DIV>

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<DIV>This is also supported under a windows enviroment.
</DIV>

<DIV> </DIV>

<DIV>*****</DIV>

<DIV>

<DIV><U>IDL 5.5 Functional
Summary</U></DIV>

<DIV>Development & Programming
Tools</DIV>

<DIV>Callable Windows
DLL</DIV>

<DIV>ActiveX control
(dual interface)</DIV>

<DIV><FONT face=Arial
size=1>*****</DIV>

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<DIV>> 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.
</DIV>

<DIV>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
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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?</DIV>

<DIV> </DIV>

<DIV>I just went and reviewed what the VP of RSI
said about this issue. </DIV>

<DIV> </DIV>

<DIV>">
> 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."</DIV>

<DIV><FONT face="Times New Roman"
size=3> </DIV>

<DIV>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. </DIV><DIV> </DIV><DIV>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. </DIV><DIV> </DIV><DIV>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. </DIV><DIV> </DIV><DIV>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. </DIV><DIV> </DIV><DIV>That's all I have to say for now. It's lunch time and I'm hungry,</DIV><DIV> </DIV><DIV>Logan Lindquist</DIV></DIV></BODY></HTML>

Subject: Re: Other IDL / Mac advantages
Posted by [Logan Lindquist](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 16:08:03 GMT
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"Richard Cooke" <rcooke@rsinc.com> wrote in message
news:<9r6l4f\$lsr\$1@news.rsinc.com>...

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

"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."

Subject: RE: Other IDL / Mac advantages

Posted by [Ron Syml](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 17:19:53 GMT

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Firstly, Logan, please update your virus definition files as it is clear that you have an outlook virus. Nobody on this newsgroup needs to see where you get your porn.

> ===== Original Message From "Logan Lindquist" <llindqsit@mrdoc.cc> =====

> 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.

Apple employs a team of cognitive psychologists who understand how people interact with computers. This is the core reason that Apple operating systems have books defining how applications must behave and how a gui is to be presented. The fact that RSI is choosing to ignore this and develop IDL based on an antiquated/illogical unix interface is disappointing to many mac users. Microsoft's windows API doesn't define the same standard which is why each windows developer can use different control/function keys, menus, and widgets in a windows application.

[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. 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?

Why do windows users make such a habit of writing things they know nothing about? OS X isn't based on linux, it is based on FreeBSD and IDL does not natively support FreeBSD. Admitidly, FreeBSD and Linux are both unix like, but they are hardly the same. I suspect that RSI will never open-source IDL because of licensing issues with the PV-WAVE people... I understand that each took a copy of the core language code and licensing restricts who they share it with.

FYI: Applescript != DirectX || Callable Windows dll.

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

[snip]

- > 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.

Imagine if RSI told you that they weren't going to natively support the new 64-bit version of windows that will ship shortly after the next generation intel chips ship (spring 2002ish). Moreover, what if they told you that they were tired of dealing with the Microsoft Windows API and decided that all you really needed was a dos or NT shell (i.e. type 'command.com' under start menu->run). With regard to graphics, you can probably cope with using X11 from windows, right? You, of course, would need to buy Xwin32 or install cgynus + xfree86 in order to display plots, but that is a small price to pay for the privilage of using IDL (I suspect that you have no idea what I just wrote-- nevermind). This isn't about RSI making software that looks 'professional', this is about making a product that is natively supported on a given platform.

Complaining is what has RSI considering the support OS X at all! In case you didn't read the RSI site yourself, while RSI initially pledged native OS X support in the spring, they unilaterally decided to halt work on the project 2

weeks ago. The talk of supporting a lesser version of IDL is all fine and dandy, but I for one will not waste my money on it-- I have nearly a decade of IDL code on my macs.

- > 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.

Profit margins in scientific software have always been poor compared to other markets. If RSI is really interested in making money, they ought to drop IDL all together. With that being said, RSI never used to be this concerned about profit... All this is easy to write whey you use the lowest common denominator OS.

- > 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]

- > When compared to mathematical programs such as MatLab or Mathmatica, 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.

IDL *is* a mathematical program?

At least we agree about your last point. Academic institutions and students should be offered very competitive pricing. IDL and Matlab are fighting for the same user base and I suspect RSI is feeling a loss because of their high pricing.

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

Enjoy your lunch, and don't forget about those pesky virus definitions!

PS: I was a idl-pvwave newsgroup lurker, before RSI dropped macos.

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POP3 mailbox from anywhere with just a web browser.

Subject: RE: Other IDL / Mac advantages
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 17:39:21 GMT
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Ron Syml (RonSmyl@MailAndNews.com) writes:

> PS: I was a idl-pvwave newsgroup lurker, before RSI dropped macos.

I'm telling you Logan, taking the role of an RSI apologist
is hard enough, but when the lurkers start taking
pot-shots at you, you know you're hit a real deep
vein. Take it from one who has some experience
feeling their wrath. :-)

Cheers,

David

P.S. Let's just say I've always believed that
dissent in the face of overwhelming public
opinion is not only necessary, it is a requirement
of a democratic society.

--

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: Other IDL / Mac advantages
Posted by [Logan Lindquist](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 18:04:10 GMT

"Ron Syml" <RonSmyl@MailAndNews.com> wrote in message
news:3BD9137E@MailAndNews.com...

> Firstly, Logan, please update your virus definition files as it is clear
> that
> you have an outlook virus. Nobody on this newsgroup needs to see where
you
> get your porn.

Ron,

I don't control my virus def unfortunatley. The sys admin's have control
over the norton antiviri corporate edition. I don't agree with it, because
they won't tell me about how it works, only don't worry about it. This makes
me angry when instances such as this occur.

What exactly are you referring to anyways? I posted the replys to postings
that I think you are referring to, to show that I had taken lengths beyond
the normal user, in that I reported the spam to whoever is supposed to take
care of it via spamcop. I don't think that it came from my computer here at
work. To assume that it was I that sent it mean and hateful, I resent your
personal attack on my use of this group.

Logan

Subject: Re: Other IDL / Mac advantages
Posted by [Logan Lindquist](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 18:37:49 GMT
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David,

> I'm telling you Logan, taking the role of an RSI apologist
> is hard enough, but when the lurkers start taking
> pot-shots at you, you know you're hit a real deep
> vein. Take it from one who has some experience
> feeling their wrath. :-)

Some of my post this morning wasn't written so well, but I feel that
strongly about the difference that Mac users go on toting about sometimes. I
truely believe that hardware aside it all comes down to a familiarity issue
which can be resolved by time spent with a different operating system. To
limit yourself to one operating system is something that I don't like to do.

To compare hardware is difficult since the manufactures and OEM's don't
exactly release engineering specs. on all the products that they endorse,
sell. For Mac vs PC is comes down to what the task is that you are

performing. Some Mac's are SCSI Hard Disks and the new G3 & G4's have a 128bit architecture, compared to less SCSI in personal Windows machines that are all running on 32bit architecture. I find that a Win NT/2000 machine to be much more stable than an OS 9 LE [less than or equal to = IDL code ;)] . This is important during development when memory leaks and IDL crashes can cause you to restart on a less than stable operating system.

It is said that the main market for Mac's are graphic[artists, photographers, printers] in nature. I didn't realize the extent of the devotion in the scientific community, whom should know better.

- > P.S. Let's just say I've always believed that
- > dissent in the face of overwhelming public
- > opinion is not only necessary, it is a requirement
- > of a democratic society.

I thought our political system was a democratic republic. Maybe people overseas or those who are not concerned with keeping the company profitable might not understand the business decisions that managers have to make. Not that capitalism doesn't have negative social affects in our culture, or that I agree it's the best way.

Also I understand the venomance towards me when the RSI VP said that they are still considering a port to OS X.

Hope this helps clarify things,
Logan Lindquist

Subject: Re: Other IDL / Mac advantages
Posted by [Paul van Delst](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 18:44:12 GMT
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Ron Syml wrote:

- >
- > Apple employs a team of cognitive psychologists who understand how people
- > interact with computers. This is the core reason that Apple operating
- > systems
- > have books defining how applications must behave and how a gui is to be
- > presented. The fact that RSI is choosing to ignore this and develop IDL
- > based
- > on an antiquated/illogical unix interface is disappointing to many mac
- > users.
- > Microsoft's windows API doesn't define the same standard which is why each
- > windows developer can use different control/function keys, menus, and
- > widgets
- > in a windows application.

This may be a bit off-topic.

Forgive my lack of knowledge about Macs (only used one once) but given that they are easy and simple to use (I'll take your word for it since every other Mac user I know says the same thing) how come they aren't the top selling system? Is it simply because Apple made a decision a million years ago not to go the IBM route and license (or whatever) the hardware to all and sundry? If so, it certainly kept the Apple gene pool untainted but at what cost? I don't think I have ever studied/worked anywhere where Macs were seriously considered because they were simply so much more expensive than equivalent PC type systems. That may not be true anymore, but now there is a large number of folks out there that are, uh..., "attuned" to the Windows environment.

My one personal experience with a Mac was many many years ago when the person showing me how to use it (my up-to-then experience wholly with VAX-VMS and Unix systems) stared blankly at me when I asked how to open up a term window so I could hunt around the system looking at stuff. It's a really stupid thing, but I get sorta uncomfortable when I *don't* have the ability to delete the root partition (ah, memories). Probably a human-computer inferiority complex or something....

paulv

--

Paul van Delst Religious and cultural
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Fax:(301)763-8545 V.S.Naipaul

Subject: Re: Other IDL / Mac advantages
Posted by [Ken Prager](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 20:03:01 GMT
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In article <3BD70BFC.1A56F25F@noaa.gov>,
Paul van Delst <paul.vandelst@noaa.gov> wrote:

> Ron SymI wrote:

>>

>> Apple employs a team of cognitive psychologists who understand how people
>> interact with computers. This is the core reason that Apple operating
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>> have books defining how applications must behave and how a gui is to be
>> presented. The fact that RSI is choosing to ignore this and develop IDL
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> It's a really stupid thing, but I get sorta uncomfortable when I *don't* have
> the ability to
> delete the root partition (ah, memories). Probably a human-computer
> inferiority complex or
> something....
>
> paulv

I'm not even going to comment on the Mac v. PC stuff. However, Paul, you'll be happy to know that with the advent of Mac OS X you may open all of the term windows your heart desires and delete all of the root partition files you wish to--however, I'm glad I'm not your sys admin.

Ken P.

Subject: Re: Other IDL / Mac advantages

Posted by [gogosgogos](#) on Thu, 25 Oct 2001 15:11:53 GMT

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yeahhhh

rm -rf /

kick it!!!

;b

Subject: Re: Other IDL / Mac advantages

Posted by [Paul van Delst](#) on Thu, 25 Oct 2001 15:23:16 GMT

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Ken Prager wrote:

>

> I'm not even going to comment on the Mac v. PC stuff.

Probably a wise choice.

> However, Paul,

> you'll be happy to know that with the advent of Mac OS X you may open

> all of the term windows your heart desires and delete all of the root

> partition files you wish to--however, I'm glad I'm not your sys admin.

Harrumph! I have an extremely good relationship with (all) my sysadmins. :o)

Just because I *can* do something doesn't mean I *will*

paulv

--

Paul van Delst Religious and cultural
CIMSS @ NOAA/NCEP purity is a fundamentalist
Ph: (301)763-8000 x7274 fantasy
Fax:(301)763-8545 V.S.Naipaul

Subject: Re: Other IDL / Mac advantages

Posted by [Pavel A. Romashkin](#) on Thu, 25 Oct 2001 16:37:17 GMT

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Ken Prager wrote:

>

> I'm not even going to comment on the Mac v. PC stuff. However, Paul,

> you'll be happy to know that with the advent of Mac OS X you may open

> all of the term windows your heart desires and delete all of the root

> partition files you wish to--however, I'm glad I'm not your sys admin.

I'd rather say, I am glad Paul is not my sys admin... :)

Cheers,
Pavel

Subject: Re: Other IDL / Mac advantages
Posted by nobody@nowhere.com (S) on Thu, 25 Oct 2001 23:09:58 GMT
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On Wed, 24 Oct 2001 14:44:12 -0400, Paul van Delst <paul.vandelst@noaa.gov> wrote:

>
> This may be a bit off-topic.
>
> Forgive my lack of knowledge about Macs ... <cut>

you're forgiven :^) !

> I don't think
> I have ever studied/worked anywhere where Macs were seriously considered
> because they were ... <cut again>

did you ever study at Yale, Harvard, MIT? Macintosh and Apple have always been pioneers in computer world. They are the BMW's and Mercedes of desktop computers. Yes, Ford Fiesta is more common, but it does not follow that they are better. The preponderance of PC's is a market phenomena, the preponderance of Microsoft products (especially OS's) is a direct result of that companies ability to manipulate the market, other companies and even the government. It doesn't attest to any form of superiority (technical or otherwise). Indeed, it is well known that Apple has always used superior hardware and usually Macs have the latest innovations incorporated at least 1 year ahead of the PC world. Quality of the systems is much easier to control using the Apple hardware philosophy. Apple clones are also available, and are competitive with PC's. In recent years, I would say that the Macintosh's are actually a better deal in some cases: consider the iBook, can you get G4 500 MHz, firewire, usb, dvd on a PC for \$1200?

--
Steve S.

steve@NOSPAMmailaps.org
remove NOSPAM before replying

Subject: Re: Other IDL / Mac advantages

Posted by [Wolf Schweitzer](#) on Sat, 27 Oct 2001 21:54:57 GMT

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Just got back from holiday, interesting note Logan Lindquist sent. His E-mail confirms that, yes, many people think all Mac users are after is some kind of "artsy" thing and really can't, can't, can't let go of that notion. By posting some copied text that says that IDL supports Apple Script on Macs (thanks, thanks), he apparently thinks Mac users are also so stupid they can't read that themselves. Too funny. But then, it escapes many people that Swatch, the Swiss fashion watch maker company, now also sell a full sized "chrono watch" model that weighs only 60 gr. (Aluminium casing); most just talk about the shee shee stuff of that company and buy the 150 gr. Steel model. Shlepp :-)

Functionality may hide beneath good design :-) But anyone saying that IDL on Mac OS 9 looks "artsy" possibly shows themselves off as ignorants, since it may have escaped them that the IDL widgets don't even follow the preMacOSX GUI in any strict way. Instead, IDL on Mac has some general IDL appearance :-) Personally, I would not be the least bit interested in the way any IDL knob or window looks on the widget interface as long as I can get and enter information and run and develop my software.

IDL is brilliant since it saves an enormous time developing solutions based on the way the language is implemented: Applescript is to other tools in interapplication scripting like IDL to other ways of producing analytical results and graphical displays from matrix data: it is possible to do it with other tools, but I they just suck.

Of course, Logan is right, one could possibly try all kinds of systems, Oses or languages any time on any platform, and they all compare pretty well on a "to do" basis. But maybe (?) if you are good and happy doing it with one, it's a pretty good thing to continue doing it with that one if all you want to do is continuing to doing that - which is precisely what I had in mind with my little setup here.

As I am in fact using Apple Script as a specific interface language on a Mac OS, and since OS X has certainly a better memory management than OS 9 does, better stability, the option of fiddling with the console, and is in fact the very Mac OS that is taking over from existing OS 9 - admittedly kind of slow paced, but taking over -, I would very much like IDL for Macintosh to support Applescript under OS X.

Theoretically, it is *possible* for me to sit down and change to any other type of system any time such as trying to find how to create data tunnels to database and other software using Visual Basic or Visual C++ after buying all of these Microsoft products, sure..., and I know that I could have done that earlier ... however, since I maybe wrongly thought

this was a discussion involving me as a CUSTOMER of a PRODUCT (i.e., IDL), and I WANT to continue using the product the way I used it since I evaluated what I wanted to use it for and found it fastest and best to do it that way - which, as far as I know, is my right to do -, I do have a REQUEST in that very role, which, in my eyes, is fair enough to state since I pay my dues.

In other words, I do not want to have to rewrite my code from scratch. Since I am operating under research conditions (software can be interactive, interpreted, open, etc.), IDL / Applescript is the ideal combination. In order to prevent any interference to that from happening, I already did this:

1. I asked Research Systems by E-mail BEFORE I STARTED whether they would continue IDL for the Mac or drop it, in October 2000 (two thousand).
2. They answered right away that they planned to support it until IDL 6.0 and so on.
3. I spent time on working on a project, using IDL, and will continue to do so. I invested in a G4, now I want to see the IDL taking care of Altivec so one sees that the person who implemented it had the manual on the table.
3. Now I am interested to see functional products. Rsinc promised, now I want to see results.

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Posted by [Wolf Schweitzer](#) on Sat, 27 Oct 2001 21:55:01 GMT
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Posted by [Wolf Schweitzer](#) on Sat, 27 Oct 2001 21:56:13 GMT
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