
Subject: Other IDL / Mac advantages

Posted by [Wolf Schweitzer](#) on Wed, 24 Oct 2001 08:16:28 GMT

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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.

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.

Neither IDL nor Applescript are easy to understand for the average teeny surfing the web maybe wanting to do "some 3D", they are great and efficient tools once you start building some way of hierarchical data storage system. I am currently working on some graphical information from medical scan images, and the progress you can make within useful time with these programming languages, passing results directly into other applications, is amazing and, also, important.

Not that this would be completely impossible on other platforms - it is just much easier to program on a higher level of abstraction. It is one whole dimension more elegant on Mac OS and Applescript.

But people do not see that aspect. Generally not. It's a "high abstraction advantage blindness".

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.

Wolf Schweitzer
Bern, Switzerland

Subject: Re: Other IDL / Mac advantages

Posted by [Paul van Delst](#) on Thu, 25 Oct 2001 15:19:15 GMT

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GB Smith wrote:

```
>  
> yeahhhh  
>  
> rm -rf /
```

Believe it or not that's what was done (not by me though). And the perpetrators were even logged in as "root" so there was no "are you sure?" message. lordy lordy lordy. I believe it

may have even been related to an early IDL installation (circa 3.5 or 3.6)

> kick it!!!

Oh, it got kicked. There were a number a sore toes and bums after that happened. Luckily I was simply watching from the sidelines with my recent DAT tape backups in hand..... :o)

paulv

--

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Subject: Re: Other IDL / Mac advantages
Posted by [Paul van Delst](#) on Fri, 26 Oct 2001 15:44:43 GMT
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"Steve Smith" wrote:

>
> 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.

Those institutions can probably afford the BMW's and Mercedes of whatever. A lot more people drive the Fiestas. I'm not talking bleeding edge stuff here - just the workaday regular joe that needs a computer to get his/her job down.

> Yes, Ford Fiesta is more common, but it does not follow that they
> are better.

No implication to that effect was intended. Indeed, given the frequency of the "Blue Screen of Death" I have experienced when I used Windows, I would jump to the opposite conclusion.

> The preponderance of PC's is a market phenomena,

Yeah, that was my point. My question was: why?

- > 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.

You've only deepened my interest now. If Apple systems were/are so great, why are PC systems so ubiquitous now? Solely due to the marketing strategies of Microsoft? I thought it had more to do with the cost effectiveness of IBM clones. Did Apple see what happened to IBM after cheap PCs became available in the 80's and decided not to do that?

- > 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.

Is this a relatively recent phenomenon? If not, the same question as before pops up: why PCs rather than Macs?

- > 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?

Yeah, but now all the various software companies are dropping Mac support... :o) (no need to reply to this last one - it is intended to be flippant.)

paulv

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Subject: Re: Other IDL / Mac advantages
Posted by [Joseph B. Gurman](#) on Sun, 28 Oct 2001 05:09:19 GMT
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In article <3BD984EB.3ABB47A9@noaa.gov>, Paul van Delst
<paul.vandelst@noaa.gov> wrote:

> "Steve Smith" wrote:

[snip]

- > You've only deepened my interest now. If Apple systems were/are so great,
- > why are PC systems so
- > ubiquitous _now_? Solely due to the marketing strategies of Microsoft? I
- > thought it had more to
- > do with the cost effectiveness of IBM clones. Did Apple see what happened
- > to IBM after cheap
- > PCs became available in the 80's and decided not to do that?
- >
- >> 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.
- >
- > Is this a relatively recent phenomenon? If not, the same question as
- > before pops up: why PC rather than Macs?

I hate to get into these religious discussions, especially when it's not on the right board, but I'll allow myself one digression. (Mea culpa.)

Macs made almost everyone unhappy 5 - 6 years ago. It made good corporate sense then to go with the crowd. The quality of the Mac OS(es) and hardware is much better now, but the damage was done --- before 1995. It was done by IBM introducing the first "business" PV in 1983 (?) and Apple never being able to catch up. For corporate America (don't know about elsewhere), "No one ever lost his job recommending IBM" as a corporate ladder-climbing philosophy seamlessly became "No one ever lost her job by recommending Microsoft." Big business likes big business, and big business (here, anyway) has never been able to figure Apple out, not as a producer of products, not as an investment. Only the consumer (here) appears to.

- >
- >> 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?
- >
- > Yeah, but now all the various software companies are dropping Mac
- > support... :o) (no need to
- > reply to this last one - it is intended to be flippant.)

Maybe more to the point for this group, I compared a 1.7 GHz P4 Dell OptiPlex 400 (256K cache, 4 PCI slots after sound card is installed, Windows 2000, 3 year hardware and OS software support, 4X AGP 32 Mbyte NVidia 2 card, 17 inch TFT display, 16x "max" CD-RW, 128 Mbyte memory, 40 Gbyte 7200 rpm drive, 10/100 Ethernet, 1 spare drive bay, 4 USB

ports), US federal pricing, to a Power Mac G4 I recently ordered (733 MHz G4 w/AltiVec, 256K cache, 4X AGP Nvidia GeForce 2MX/32 Mbyte, 4 PCI slots, Mac OS 9.2.1 and 10.1, 3 year AppleCare on hardware and OS, 17 inch TFT Apple Studio Display, 12x10x32 CD-RW, 128 Mbyte memory, 40 Gbyte 5400 rpm drive, 10/100/1000 Ethernet, 2 spare drive bays, 2 USB ports + 2 on Studio Display, 2 FireWire ports), and the price difference was < \$100 out of ~ \$2400.

One could argue forever about whether the 1.7 GHz P4 or the 733 MHz G4 was "faster" or "better," over whether Gbit Ethernet is "necessary," over whether the Apple Studio Display and its digital interface is better, and so on and on, but the two systems are pretty comparable. But who would really choose Windows 2000 over a FreeBSD based system? Probably only corporate America (and maybe other contries' corporations), because "You can't lose your job recommending Microsoft." I'm not saying it's a bad decision, just that it was never made with much more than a pointy-haired boss's level of insight.

Of course, now you'll have to "rent" Microsoft's OSes every year in order to get updates, while Apple will just sell you the update. Maybe then even hair-acuteness-challenged will take notice.... too late for most of them.

It's interesting that the corporate bosses may drive BMW's or Mercedes products (to which Steve Jobs compares Apple), but they don't want their IT departments roaring around with anything more fun than a Ford Contour.

IMHO, of course,

Joe Gurman
