
Subject: Re: OT(ish): ANA seems to be back
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 14 Nov 2001 14:05:21 GMT
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James Tappin (sjt@star.sr.bham.ac.uk) writes:

> It looks as if the ANA site <http://ana.lmsal.com/> is operation again. Still
> no updates since Sept 00 though.

This is the downside of "free" software. At least
when you pay for it you get *something*, even if you
don't get the help files to be able to use it.

Cheers,

David

--

David W. Fanning, Ph.D.
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Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>
Toll-Free IDL Book Orders: 1-888-461-0155

Subject: Re: OT(ish): ANA seems to be back
Posted by [hcp](#) on Wed, 14 Nov 2001 14:32:45 GMT
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In article <MPG.165c280c7c3ae17d98976d@news.frii.com>, David Fanning
<david@dfanning.com> writes:

|> James Tappin (sjt@star.sr.bham.ac.uk) writes:

|>

|> > It looks as if the ANA site <http://ana.lmsal.com/> is operation again. Still

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|> don't get the help files to be able to use it.

It is important to note that there are many differences between one
Free Software project and another, just as there are between one proprietary
software company and another.

Perhaps the biggest difference is between

(a) projects run by a moderate sized committee (normally with a substantial
user community from which that committee is drawn) and

(b) projects which are essentially a one-man effort (often with a user community drawn from one government lab).

R, whatever its failings, is firmly in the first category, with an army of grey statisticians to keep it alive even if any one of them becomes the less pleasant sort of statistic. The same is clearly true of GCC, the Linux kernel, perl etc.

ANA is (was) in category (b) [1], which means that it only took one person to change employers and the whole thing ground to a halt. This is a risk with small commercial suppliers and small Free Software suppliers alike. Of course, with Free Software you have the source code and can fix/re-compile it yourself, so it keeps working as you upgrade your OS. But that is nothing like as satisfactory as being part of a larger user community.

Hugh

[1] As is Yorick.

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Subject: Re: OT(ish): ANA seems to be back
Posted by [Ron Syml](#) on Wed, 14 Nov 2001 14:55:56 GMT
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On Wed, 14 Nov 2001, David Fanning wrote:

> This is the downside of "free" software. At least
> when you pay for it you get *something*, even if you
> don't get the help files to be able to use it.

David, what are your plans if/when RSI self-destructs due to developer/sales infighting and IDL ceases to exist? The big problem with proprietary, binary

distributed software is that there always a potential that if the company folds (or decides that your OS of choice isn't 'profitable') you will be stuck with thousands of lines of worthless code when you next upgrade your operating system. Of course, you don't have to upgrade your hardware/software-- I *could* choose to keep my beige powermac G3 with macOS 8.6 installed for the next decade just for the privilege of running IDL...

One of the downsides for IDL seems to be that even if you are willing to pay, RSI may not compile a binary for your choosen OS. At least I can compile R, scilab, octave, yorick, and ANA on my different unix machines!

Ron

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Subject: Re: OT(ish): ANA seems to be back
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 14 Nov 2001 15:31:51 GMT
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Ron Syml (RonSmyl@MailAndNews.com) writes:

> David, what are your plans if/when RSI self-destructs due to developer/sales
> infighting and IDL ceases to exist?

I plan to get a life...finally! :-)

Cheers,

David

--

David W. Fanning, Ph.D.

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Subject: Re: OT(ish): ANA seems to be back
Posted by [Nigel Wade](#) on Wed, 14 Nov 2001 16:45:58 GMT
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David Fanning wrote:

> James Tappin (sjt@star.sr.bham.ac.uk) writes:
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>

It's also the downside of commercial software when the vendors of that software decide that your platform is no longer profitable.

But, in the case of "free" software, it hasn't actually cost you anything.

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