
Subject: Re: David Stern Leaves RSI

Posted by [Pavel A. Romashkin](#) on Tue, 18 Dec 2001 18:19:25 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

This was the first year in a long time that David Stern did not come to the annual AGU meeting. I was always pleased to see him there, although he never spoke much. It was sad to see that things are really changing at RSI. In my eyes, the way it was was not bad at all.

I echo David Fanning's wishes do Dave Stern. And hey, now that he will have the time, maybe he'll get some real IDL code posted here on the newsgroup? If not at RSI, some IDL enthusiasts that appreciate clever code are still present elsewhere...

Pavel

David Fanning wrote:

>
> Folks,
>
> I just received public confirmation of rumors I have
> been hearing this week that David Stern has finally
> cashed in his chips and has left RSI.

Subject: Re: David Stern Leaves RSI

Posted by [Jonathan Boswell](#) on Tue, 18 Dec 2001 22:06:48 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

David Fanning wrote:

> IDL is a tremendous legacy, David. You done
> real, real good. Now go enjoy that retirement
> or whatever it is you want to do.

Hear hear. My first interaction with David (back in 1985?) was remarkable. I was complaining about what I thought was a bug in IDL, though it was actually a documented feature. Without offering any excuses, David promptly provided an entirely new clipping algorithm (using the !NOCLIP system variable if memory serves) which did what I wanted. He even provided an updated IDL image the next day for free. Perhaps he doesn't give snazzy presentations, but for this repeat customer, he is without peer!

Contrast this with RSI after the acquisition. New license prices approximately doubled, and support was dropped for my favorite platform (Alpha/VMS) the very next month. I don't blame David one bit for bowing out. He was probably driven out (but I have no inside info on this so it's pure speculation). I am reminded of Steve Jobs leaving Apple. Perhaps one day David too will return. At least I dearly hope he does.

- JB

Subject: Re: David Stern Leaves RSI
Posted by [thompson](#) on Tue, 18 Dec 2001 23:18:10 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

David Fanning <david@dfanning.com> writes:

> Folks,

> I just received public confirmation of rumors I have
> been hearing this week that David Stern has finally
> cashed in his chips and has left RSI.

> David was the least likely CEO I have ever known,
> always unassuming and unfailingly modest. ...

Hear, hear!

I always found it startling in the early days to call up RSI, and the CEO would answer the phone. I always found David Stern to be a very friendly and easy person to talk to.

When we first got into the business of developing electronic cameras in the lab, we bought a MicroVAX II, and identified an imaging card we wanted to buy. The equipment was so new at that time that the company making the video card didn't even have a driver yet for the MicroVAX. We put the video card company into contact with RSI, and David not only wrote an IDL interface for the card, but wrote the VMS driver as well. And then he flew over personally to install it for us. I was always impressed by that.

All of us IDL old-timers will miss him,

Bill Thompson

Subject: Re: David Stern Leaves RSI
Posted by [Andy Loughe](#) on Wed, 19 Dec 2001 00:15:57 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Hear Hear!

I remember the days when we couldn't get "contour data, x, y, /fill" to work correctly, and so David developed the /cell_fill algorithm.

We would send him the results of our test... he would make code changes over the course of an hour or two... send us the new .pro, and we would again test it on our data.

After about 3 or 4 trials, it was a new feature in IDL. I've used it everywhere I go!

Thanks for the extra effort, David.

--

Andrew Loughe =====
NOAA/OAR/FSL/AD R/FS5 | email: loughe@fsl.noaa.gov
325 Broadway | www: www-ad.fsl.noaa.gov/users/loughe
Boulder, CO 80305-3328 | phone: 303-497-6211 fax: 303-497-6301

Subject: Re: David Stern Leaves RSI
Posted by [Jeff Payne](#) on Wed, 19 Dec 2001 09:48:49 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

William Thompson wrote:

>
> All of us IDL old-timers will miss him,
>

I'll echo that a thousand times Bill.
I recall his visits to RAL in the UK, to install IDL, or to add new image display drivers and then afterwards enjoying a few beers with him, down at the Anchor Inn in Abingdon.
I still have a copy of David's SOL manual, dated October 1 1975, sitting on the desk. SOL you will recall ran on a PDP 11 under RSX11/M and was the precursor to IDL, using those still familiar commands like READI, PLOT, OPLOT, FFT, to analyse the data from the OSO range of spacecraft.

Thanks for IDL, David
Jeff Payne.

Subject: RE: David Stern Leaves RSI
Posted by [Ron Syml](#) on Wed, 19 Dec 2001 15:20:55 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

> ===== Original Message From david@dfanning.com =====

> Folks,
>
> I just received public confirmation of rumors I have
> been hearing this week that David Stern has finally
> cashed in his chips and has left RSI.

"Cashing in his chips" is a good way of looking at this, after all, he already sold his sole.

This is yet another nail in the IDL coffin. IDL was never about making a profit to people like David; rather, it was about writing really cool scientific code. Long hours and late nights were the norm, not the exception and overtime pay was never even thought about. Gone are the days when IDL programmers wrote code on thier own just 'cause it was cool and fun. You can still find that original sentiment in a few of the regulars of this group and it abounds in Linux development circles. Alas, it seems all but gone from the core of RSI. It is a sad day. I no longer expect bug fixes and feature requests in days (sometimes hours)... I now simply pray they will make the next minor version toggle. Perhpas this is just evolution. There is, of course, life outside of software development.

David, goodbye and thanks for all the fish.

Ron

Get your FREE web-based e-mail and newsgroup access at:
<http://MailAndNews.com>

Create a new mailbox, or access your existing IMAP4 or POP3 mailbox from anywhere with just a web browser.

Subject: Re: David Stern Leaves RSI
Posted by [gutmann](#) on Thu, 20 Dec 2001 01:02:45 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

As a relatively new IDL user (~2yrs) I hope that some of this spirit will live on as this is one of the things that attracts me to it. I suspect some of this spirit will continue, at least in the community that has developed around it. Whether or not the company continues to be a part of that community rather than just another company remains to be seen I suppose.

> David, goodbye and thanks for all the fish.

so long and... ;)
