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Subject: alphaLINUX IDL

Posted by [david.larkman](#) on Mon, 11 Feb 2002 10:14:14 GMT

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Please do not try to use IDL on alpha-LINUX it has been a persistent waste of time for me. Change platform or ditch IDL:

IDL does not really support alpha-LINUX architecture contrary to claims on promotional literature. The License manager does not work and there are several underlying c based subroutines which do not work in IDL5.4. The performance statistics for this platform are shocking. The following is information direct from IDL, please let as many people as possible know this to prevent heartache all round on this platform.

> Thanks for the reply. I forwarded your findings to the  
> development team in Boulder, and the following is their conclusion.  
>  
> They have tested the programme against several machines. Some  
> of the results are below with the conclusion at the end.

> Here are the results fom an alpha linux test machine:

> { alpha linux unix linux 5.5 Aug 28 2001 64 64}

> 1 360 ms

> 2 280 ms

> 3 63 ms

> 4 61 ms

> 5 79 ms

> 6 82 ms

> 9 114 ms

> 12 275 ms

> 13 63 ms

> 14 78 ms

> 15 79 ms

>

>

> A computer that is almost identical to the Alpha Linux test  
> machine, but instead it has Alpha OSF1 v 5.1 operating system  
> installed:

> { alpha OSF unix Compaq Tru64 5.5.1 Feb 6 2002 64 64}

> 1 26 ms

> 2 29 ms

> 3 33 ms

> 4 35 ms

> 5 43 ms

> 6 47 ms

> 9 61 ms

> 12 27 ms

> 13 34 ms  
> 14 43 ms  
> 15 50 ms

>  
> They say that the problem is with the gcc compiler for alpha  
> linux. It generates bad code. Now, there is a competing  
> compiler made by Dec Alpha, which does generate better code  
> on Alpha Linux (more like Alpha OSF).

>  
> There are a couple of reasons why the gcc compiler was  
> chosen: 1. It is the native compiler for the platform. 2. Dec  
> Alpha's compiler would have required them to link into some  
> libraries that are not included with the OS. This would have  
> required the customer to install these additional libraries  
> as well. 3. The Dec Alpha compiler for Alpha linux was far  
> behind the current version of Red Hat, so they would have had  
> to revert to an older version of RedHat linux.

>  
>  
> For these reasons, the native gcc compiler was selected even  
> though it generates bad code.

>  
> In a performance test that was done with IDL 5.5, Alpha OSF  
> was the fastest machine out of about 10 machines tested.  
> Incidentally, the alpha linux machine was identical hardware,  
> but came in last in the performance test.

>  
> Since the development of gcc is driven by the users, then the  
> platforms with the most users will become better faster.  
> Linux-intel performed comparable to windows in these tests,  
> which shows that the gcc compiler for intel is performing much better.

>  
> Please also note that the plan is to not support alpha linux  
> in the next release of IDL.

>

