
Subject: IDL vs Direct3D, OpenGL

Posted by [bbhyun2001](#) on Tue, 13 Jan 2004 18:44:51 GMT

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

Hello,

I am just learning IDL and I am considering to write 3D visualization code with IDL. Before I start to do that, I want to know how IDL is good for my purpose. Does IDL have enough functionality as Direct3D or OpenGL has? What is the bottom line of IDL for object graphics? If it does, what is the good way to learn about object graphics in IDL? Thanks.

BB

Subject: Re: IDL vs Direct3D, OpenGL

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 15 Jan 2004 18:28:19 GMT

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

Michael Wallace writes:

> I don't mean to take things off-subject here, but does RSI have any
> plans to make a decent IDLDE for Linux/Unix? Or will they always leave
> it in that half-backed, unusable and ugly state? Anyway, there are many
> reasons while my primary development consists of gvim and command-line IDL.

Why would RSI want to invest time and money in this when they have JD doing it for them for free (apparently)?

Believe me, I have never seen *anyone* at RSI on a UNIX machine use anything except IDLWAVE to write IDL code.

Cheers,

David

--

David W. Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.

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: IDL vs Direct3D, OpenGL

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Fri, 16 Jan 2004 04:12:55 GMT

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

David Yip writes:

- > IDL may be better for non programmers but if you are a programmer,
- > it's your worse nightmare.

Oh, now hold a second there. Them's fightin words!

Cheers,

David

--

David W. Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.

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: IDL vs Direct3D, OpenGL

Posted by [rkneusel](#) on Fri, 16 Jan 2004 23:05:15 GMT

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

dcw_yip@yahoo.com (David Yip) wrote in message
news:<201431cc.0401151807.29395496@posting.google.com>...

- > IDL may be better for non programmers but if you are a programmer,
- > it's your worse nightmare. In many ways, it's the incarnation of all
- > the things you shouldn't do in a good programming language.

I'd like to think of myself as a programmer, and perhaps I have the credentials to back it up, and I certainly don't consider IDL to be a programmer's worst nightmare. I guess you've never had to use COBOL.
:)

Seriously, it seems to me that you've been a tad unfair to IDL. Consider what IDL was **designed** to be: an interactive language for data exploration and analysis. And, consider **when** this was done: back long, long ago when about the only other interactive system around was Forth.

The point is, IDL wasn't designed as a replacement for C/C++/Java. It was designed for interactive use and for programs that, for the most part, are written and maintained by one person. Of course, there are exceptions to this statement.

If you think that the folks who developed and continue to develop IDL are somehow lacking in a solid foundation in computer science and compiler design think again, it ain't true! They know full well what

sort of language they have and intend to keep it in that vein.

That said, yes, IDL isn't what you'd choose to write a really large software project in. And, this is okay. It *is* something you'd consider prototyping with, or developing algorithms that will ultimately be implemented in another language.

IDL isn't speedy? I strongly suspect that it will perform on par with or better than many existing interpreters (Perl, Java, Python, Matlab, Mathematica, etc).

It might be fun to consider what IDL would need to be like to make it a suitable choice for a large software development project, but to fault it for not being that when it never was meant to be isn't exactly fair.

Besides, there is a certain elegance to be found in not having strongly-typed variables, it lets you do some fun things. Consider it living on the edge.

Ron Kneusel
rkneusel@qwest.net

Subject: Re: IDL vs Direct3D, OpenGL
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Fri, 16 Jan 2004 23:19:04 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Ron Kneusel writes:

> Besides, there is a certain elegance to be found in not having
> strongly-typed variables, it lets you do some fun things. Consider it
> living on the edge.

Amen, brother!

Cheers,

David

--

David W. Fanning, Ph.D.
Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.
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
