
Subject: IDL alternatives?

Posted by [zowie](#) on Wed, 31 May 1995 07:00:00 GMT

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Well, I got tired of buggy behavior from my old copy of IDL (3.5.0 for Ultrix) (it's dumping core again), and called RSI to get a price on the update to 4.0. I've been using IDL for about six months, enough time to be excited by the functionality, and horrified at the 1970s programmer interface.

They told me it would cost over \$1,000 per year for maintenance (they apparently recently split tech support off from "standard maintenance" and now charge extra for it). Talk about highway robbery! Now I know how Richard Stallman felt -- between their swap leaks, stripped binaries (so you can't even link in yer own malloc to fix the swap leaks), core dumps, and oppressive licensing tactics, I'm of half a mind to implement a clean version of the language and give it away free to people who are stuck with large IDL libraries. I certainly don't want to submit to what I perceive as (at best) extremely poor PR or (at worst) addict-and-screw tactics.

Anyway, before taking such a drastic step, I'm interested in finding out just how compatible PV/WAVE is with existing (old) IDL code. Does anyone have experience with both packages? (I checked the FAQ before posting...)

At this point, I'm basically trying to decide between porting my libraries to 'C' while they're still small enough to manage, finding an existing replacement interpreter (PV-WAVE?), or implementing an interpreter subset. Comments welcomed.

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