Subject: Re: IDL UNIX->PC code compatability
Posted by davidf on Thu, 19 Jun 1997 07:00:00 GMT

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Scott Gennari writes:

> We are considering the NT version of IDL (5.0 i guess) and have
> been using UNIX Solaris IDL 4.x for a couple of years.
>
> What problems passing code back and forth between UNIX and PC
> IDL will there be? What about byte swapping on PC's?

None if you were thinking ahead and put all your binary
data in XDR format. :-)

If you didn't, ByteSwap will solve most of your problems.

> I've heard about like length limitations on pathnames/filenames.
> The bottom line is I don't want to have two versions of essentially
> the same code for each platform just to deal with porting issues.

Get IDL 5.0 so you don't have to worry at all about file names.
Make them as long as you like. (Although other software that you
will probably have on your machine will still not *totally* like
long filenames. Don't you wish you could pay a fortune and update
all your software at once? :-)

> Also any comments on IDL NT performance would be appreciated. We plan
> on a 266 MHz PII with 128 MB RAM and SCSI2 drives.

My experience with IDL NT has been terrific. I love it. There are
certainly bugs here and there, but these will all be gone in the
next release. ;-)

> It's just too bad an IDL/ENVI license will cost more than the PC. That
> seems warped to me.

Even a 266 MHz PII is just a doorstop without software. Seems to
me that a large part of the value of any system is the software
you put on it. The question is, do you save $1500 of time and
effort using IDL as opposed to doing whatever it is you do some
other way. Maybe you could write C programs. How much time and
effort do you think it would take you to learn to write your
programs in Visual C++? In my situation, I would probably starve
before I figured it out. Makes IDL look like a bargain, at least
to me.

Cheers,

David

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Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: http://www.dfanning.com
IDL 5 Reports: http://www.dfanning.com/documents/anomaly5.html

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Subject: Re: IDL UNIX->PC code compatability
Posted by mgs on Fri, 20 Jun 1997 07:00:00 GMT
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In article <MPG.e13540358c83a399896b6@news.frii.com>, davidf@dfanning.com
(David Fanning) wrote:

> Scott Gennari writes:
>
...
>> It's just too bad an IDL/ENVI license will cost more than the PC. That
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> effort do you think it would take you to learn to write your
> programs in Visual C++? In my situation, I would probably starve
> before I figured it out. Makes IDL look like a bargain, at least
> to me.

I had a short contract last year writing some C++. First I was told to use
any language I wanted (including PV-WAVE), so I wrote it in Bourne Shell. I
finished in a week. Then they said it had to be written in C++. So a month
later I had mimicked my shell program in C++. No additional functionality
(except being faster - which was not a concern/priority). Not to mention
the shell was free and the C++ environment was over $2K.

Same company, previous year, different project: I pushed for the purchase
of ENVI for the project. The project didn't have the money for it - all
software purchases were on hold. Of course many of the built-in ENVI
functions had to be recreated in IDL and/or C++. At the cost of probably
$30K, as opposed to $6K.

Regardless of the package, prices get lost in the noise very quickly when you consider the time savings.

--
Mike Schienle   Interactive Visuals
mgs@sd.cybernex.net   http://ww2.sd.cybernex.net/~mgs/

Subject: Re: IDL UNIX->PC code compatability
Posted by pit on Fri, 20 Jun 1997 07:00:00 GMT
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In article <5oc46e$t5f@news.hawaii.edu>,
 gennari@universe.Hawaii.edu (Scott Gennari) writes:

> What problems passing code back and forth between UNIX and PC
> IDL will there be? What about byte swapping on PC's?

As David already mentioned, the use of XDR format will take care for the endianess problem. That's what I use on our PC/Sun/HP Cluster.

> Also any comments on IDL NT performance would be appreciated. We plan
> on a 266 MHz PII with 128 MB RAM and SCSI2 drives.
>
> It's just too bad an IDL/ENVI license will cost more than the PC. That
> seems warped to me.

OK, I don't know wether it's an option for you, however:
What about installing Linux? That's what we use here. IDL runs like a charme, and in addition the Linux license used to be a bit cheaper for Linux than for other platforms (at least with version 4.01, don't know about 5). Together with the saved money for NT, this might get the software costs lower than the hardware :-)

  Peter

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 -- * -- * ...-- * -- * ...-- * -- * ...-- * -- * ...-- * -- * ...-- * --
Come and see the stars!   http://www.kis.uni-freiburg.de/~ps/SFB
Sternfreunde Breisgau e.V.   Tel.: +49 7641 3492
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Subject: Re: IDL UNIX->PC code compatability
Posted by Bill Sawchuck on Fri, 20 Jun 1997 07:00:00 GMT
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Scott Gennari writes:
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David Fanning replies:
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> effort do you think it would take you to learn to write your
> programs in Visual C++? In my situation, I would probably starve
> before I figured it out. Makes IDL look like a bargain, at least
> to me.

Let's not forget about RSI's maintenance policy. Ten percent of the
current s/w price per year assures that you will always have the latest
version on hand as soon as it is released. Once you've made the initial
investment in the software, the maintenance is a breeze. Currently for a
PC based license that comes out to $12.50 per month. Considering what you
get for this, I consider IDL the software bargain of the decade. We need
to keep in mind that IDL just doesn't have the broad market base that other
languages such as Visual C++ enjoy. What do you think Microsoft would
charge for IDL if it was marketed by them? Perhaps they could take some of
their best developers and produce a product similar to IDL at a lower
price. I think not. This issue of a small market base is exactly why
Microsoft has recently decided to dump their development efforts on Fortran
(user support and all!).

Bill Sawchuck
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