
Subject: Re: should I get Mac IDL 4 or 5?

Posted by [davidf](#) on Mon, 20 Oct 1997 07:00:00 GMT

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Mark Faradal (fardal@shapley.colorado.edu) writes:

> I want to get IDL for the Mac, since it's cheap for CU students.
> Now, I can only get one release, either IDL 4 or 5. And some
> people have complained about the stability of IDL5 for the
> Mac--tends to crash machines (even with OS8) and so forth. I'm
> not really using the new features of IDL5 right now, although in
> theory it would be nice to have 5 for consistency with the unix boxes
> at work. So are the complaints justified? Does RSI ever release bug
> fixes? And which version should I get?

I, too, have encountered a number of problems with IDL 5
on a Macintosh, but none have been show-stoppers and most
have concerned IDL 5 functionality, which is to be expected.

Personally, I think it would be a huge mistake for you
to purchase IDL 4. As someone who tries to be sensitive
to the needs of the people who use my software, I can tell
you that it is a huge and painful job to write IDL programs
that run successfully on different versions of the software.
In fact, it is so time consuming to do that I have basically
given up and decreed that all my new programs and program
updates will be written for IDL 5. Period.

I am sure other people who write IDL programs will do this
as well. Thus, if you are stuck with an IDL 4 version of
the software, you will be increasingly isolated from software
other people write and you want to use. This will cause you, I
believe, a whole lot more frustration in the long run than the
occasional crashes, etc, that you might experience with IDL 5.

Cheers,

David

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Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>

Subject: Re: should I get Mac IDL 4 or 5?
Posted by [Helge.Rebhan](#) on Tue, 21 Oct 1997 07:00:00 GMT
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Hi,

> at work. So are the complaints justified? Does RSI ever release bug
> fixes? And which version should I get?

I tried V5 just for half an hour on my PowerMac 8500 and it crashes about four times ;-(Might be due to some memory tuning because trapping of memory allocation problems is poor on the Mac *and* within IDL. I remember some similar problems with IDL 4.0 which is quite stable in the meanwhile.

bug fixing is mostly done in a common way for all platforms and often only in the standard way: "You have complains about your VW Rabbit ? Well, just wait for the release of our new Porsche "

Sorry, could'nt resist

Servus, Helge

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Adjust e-mail address for reply

Subject: Re: should I get Mac IDL 4 or 5?
Posted by [mgs](#) on Tue, 21 Oct 1997 07:00:00 GMT
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In article <344AEE8F.4B47@shapley.colorado.edu>, Mark Fardal
<fardal@shapley.colorado.edu> wrote:

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I made the switch from 4.0 to 5.0 (beta) on my Macs a few months ago. Although 4.0.x and 5.0.2 are not without bugs in either the Mac or UNIX versions, I like 5.0.2 better than 4.0.x. One of the biggest improvements

is access to the command line while your applications are running. You can edit and recompile the event handlers to see the effects very quickly without having to stop and restart your application.

As far as stability goes, I can't get IDL 5.x to start by selecting an IDL file with MacOS 8.0, but if I start it from (an alias of) the application, it runs great. I don't recall 5.0.2 crashing on me in months.

I'd definitely like to see more timely bug fixes from RSI, but they are not alone in that regard. I'd suggest 5.0 as the version to get.

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Mike Schienle
mgs@sd.cybernex.net

Interactive Visuals
<http://ww2.sd.cybernex.net/~mgs/>

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> at work. So are the complaints justified? Does RSI ever release bug
> fixes? And which version should I get?

Yes, RSI does fix bugs, which is why the current release is 5.0.2.
I have not put it through a lot of hoop son the PowerMac, but it does what
I need it to do without crashes, on both a PowerBook and a desktop
machine.

Joe Gurman

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