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Subject: Re: Computing Speed

Posted by [mgs](#) on Tue, 17 Feb 1998 08:00:00 GMT

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In article <34EA0198.C58@ktaadn.com>, Matthew Hanson <matt@ktaadn.com> wrote:

> Greeting all,  
> I have been running IDL on a Sparc Station20 for several months. A  
> couple months ago we got an Ultra 1 (167MHz, 128MB RAM) and i used that  
> for a while for our IDL apps. Now i have a Pentium II (300MHz) with 128  
> MB of RAM.  
> Running some computationally intensive surface fitting and FFT's on both  
> machines i have found, quite surprisingly, that the PC (running NT) is  
> whuppin the SUN Station (which costs roughly 6 times the PC).  
>  
> (We also run a Atmospheric Fortran program - the PC runs this about 8  
> times faster than the UNIX)  
>  
> What has been other people's experience running IDL on PC and UNIX based  
> machines? How about Macs? Fast, slow. . . ?

I found a PowerMac 7500/100 (PPC 601) to be the same overall speed as a Sun SPARCStation 10/51. This was also the same speed as a Pentium 90 running Windows 95. The Pentium had a Matrox video board that was 3x faster than the Vitek video board on the Sun, and about 4x faster than the built-in Mac video. Unfortunately, these are all 3-year old systems now. I'd like to see additional comments regarding newer systems.

My feeling is that the Sun would begin to outperform the PC and Mac hardware when all of the systems are under higher loads. Generally speaking, UNIX systems are geared for handling hundreds of queued processes, whereas the other OS's degrade faster under higher loads.

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Mike Schienle  
[mgs@sd.cybernex.net](mailto:mgs@sd.cybernex.net)

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

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Subject: Re: Computing Speed

Posted by [callen](#) on Wed, 18 Feb 1998 08:00:00 GMT

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Matthew Hanson ([matt@ktaadn.com](mailto:matt@ktaadn.com)) wrote:

: Running some computationally intensive surface fitting and FFT's on both  
: machines i have found, quite surprisingly, that the PC (running NT) is

I find that standard C-based computations tend to follow one of the SPEC benchmarks in terms of relative speed of hardware (read the SPEC

algorithm descriptions to see which might match your mix of computations). I am able to use the SPECfp and/or SPECint numbers to predict my software's performance on new hardware.

If someone has access to an Intel box running both NT and Linux, I think lots of folks in this newsgroup (like me :- ) would be interested in the IDL benchmark results.

-- Charles Allen --

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Subject: Re: Computing Speed  
Posted by [Joe\[1\]](#) on Wed, 18 Feb 1998 08:00:00 GMT  
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Matthew Hanson wrote:

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> Greeting all,  
> I have been running IDL on a Sparc Station20 for several months. A  
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> What has been other people's experience running IDL on PC and UNIX  
> based  
> machines? How about Macs? Fast, slow. . . ?

I noticed the same thing when I switched from a DEC Alpha 3000/500 to a PPro 200MHz a couple of years ago. The PPro was nearly twice as fast and most IDL tests and it cost way less than the Alpha (and I could buy software for NT unlike Digital Unix). Most of the Alpha folks here have upgraded to PC's. We are now working on getting rid of Sun's and saving a few hundred thousand dollars in the process.

I noted a follow up post talking about the Unix boxes performing better under load. Well that may be true, however, I offer that the majority of computers out there sit on a desk dedicated to one user and spend the majority of their time running a screensaver.

It is really hard to justify spending 3 to 10 times more (including software) for a Unix box over a PC. Mac's are another story ;)

Z

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Joe Zawodny <http://wwwp.exis.net/~zawodny>

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Subject: Re: Computing Speed  
Posted by [sclaflin](#) on Thu, 19 Feb 1998 08:00:00 GMT  
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Charles Allen ([callen@bga.com](mailto:callen@bga.com)) wrote:

: If someone has access to an Intel box running both NT and Linux, I  
: think lots of folks in this newsgroup (like me :- ) would be interested  
: in the IDL benchmark results.

: -- Charles Allen --

Here are some results from running time\_test with IDL 4 on three machines.

Time (s)	Machine
8.2	Sun Ultra 1, 167 MHz, 128 MB, Solaris 2.5
4.9	Sun Ultra 2, 296 MHz, 260 MB, Solaris 2.5
3.9	Dell Pentium Pro, 200 MHz, 64 MB, Win95

Does anyone have Linux?

--Scott Claflin

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