
Subject: Re: New IDL Update Policy
Posted by [zawodny](#) on Fri, 04 Jun 1993 11:44:50 GMT
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In article <3JUN199323510462@stars.gsfc.nasa.gov> landsman@stars.gsfc.nasa.gov (Wayne Landsman (301)-286-3625) writes:

>
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> maintenance license in order to update to Version 3.1. There are no
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> --Wayne Landsman landsman@stars.gsfc.nasa.gov
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It will be interesting to find out what this is really going to cost (Especially since we have a site license for PV-Wave here!).

--
Joseph M. Zawodny (KO4LW) NASA Langley Research Center
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Packet: ko4lw@wb0tax.va.usa

Subject: Re: New IDL Update Policy
Posted by [thompson](#) on Fri, 04 Jun 1993 13:55:46 GMT
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zawodny@arbd0.larc.nasa.gov (Dr. Joseph M Zawodny) writes:

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I guess that's fine if you're using network licenses from a single license manager, but we've been using IDL so long that most of our licenses are the original unlimited node-locked kind, and I believe that all the ones we've been buying since then for various clustered workstations have also been node-locked. Our problem is that we have lots of small licenses instead of just a few big licenses.

Bill Thompson

Subject: Re: New IDL Update Policy

Posted by [thompson](#) on Fri, 04 Jun 1993 20:00:26 GMT

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thompson@serts.gsfc.nasa.gov (William Thompson) writes:

> zawodny@arbd0.larc.nasa.gov (Dr. Joseph M Zawodny) writes:

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> just a few big licenses.

Sorry to follow up myself, but I wanted to say more clearly that what truly
concerns me about the new maintenance policy is the lack of a discount for
multiple licenses. This particularly disturbs me in connection with IDL for
Windows, since that would be something that one could conceivably buy a bunch
of small copies for individuals, where before one would buy a single more
expensive copy that would service a whole bunch of people. The fact that we've
not been in the habit of buying floating network licenses also seems to work
against us, in a way that doesn't seem to me to be fair.

Most of the software that I've seen in the workstation world prices it's
maintenance as a percentage of the original price of the software. Thus if you
got a multi-license discount when you bought the software, you would get the
same discount on the yearly maintenance costs. (On the other hand, telephone
support is often priced differently, with less consistency from company to
company, but generally depending on the number of contacts, and sometimes
factoring in the number of licenses, and sometimes not.)

Bill Thompson

Subject: Re: New IDL Update Policy
Posted by [scowen](#) on Sun, 06 Jun 1993 17:45:14 GMT
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This whole upgrade/maintenance business with RSI is a crock.

I've just been pricing stuff for a suite of 3 DEC Alphas we're considering buying here at ASU, and have found out very interesting new pricing information that the majority of IDL users out there may not know about.

Last week most of us received letters from the kind folk at RSI indicating that it would cost us around \$450 to upgrade our DEC 5000's to v3.1 (that's the sticker price for all DEC machines because RSI says they're having problems with DEC as a vendor finding bug solutions" - why this cost has to be passed on to the customer because they're employing people who can't find the solutions themselves I don't know...) *as well as* the \$200 for continued maintenance which now has to be through *one* person per site if you want to keep the costs down. Anyway, since we're purchasing new machines I wanted to get pricing on licenses for the new architectures.

I was told that "oh, they're (licenses for the Alpha OSF/1, available now) available for the same price that licenses are now". This sounded nice until I asked for a written quote. Last year we purchased node-locked multi user licenses for \$1500 per platform. The educational price of the same licenses now is somewhere around \$7300 (\$15000 list)!!!! For our budgeted \$1500 we can only get the one node/one user license. This is getting way out of control.

RSI is now embarked upon a policy that will probably price them out of the market. We're especially annoyed here since in the last 6-12 months we have invested a lot of time and effort developing software for the IDL environment only to find that it's going to cost us major \$\$\$'s just to stay current and be able to continue using our code. Of course the obvious solution is say "screw it" and stay with our current configuration, but it prevents us from using the Alphas as IDL platforms. The quoted improvements in IDL v3.1 over v3.0 are to say the least minimal (I think "a better contouring algorithm" was the most attractive one - hardly worth that much money guys). In fact, having now used the UNIX IDL and since it does *not* support anything useful like dynamic linking of C code and the like, there's absolutely no way we can justify spending \$7300 to equip our platforms in the way we'd need.

This has caused, to my knowledge, many people who have been using IDL for some years now with some success to consider other options for interactive environments. Personally speaking I'm thinking about diving in to KHOROS and developing object oriented packages through that (public domain) package.

I'd be interested to hear the views of other longer term IDL users with regard to this, since in these rather tight financial times we cannot afford to go blowing our valuable research \$\$\$'s on ill-thought pricing campaigns.

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Subject: Re: New IDL Update Policy
Posted by [thompson](#) on Sun, 06 Jun 1993 20:17:52 GMT
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scowen@wfpc3.uucp (Paul A. Scowen) writes:

(stuff deleted)

> ... In fact,
> having now used the UNIX IDL and since it does *not* support anything useful
> like dynamic linking of C code and the like, ..

This is not entirely a true statement. IDL is able to support dynamic linking of C and FORTRAN code on *some* UNIX platforms. I'm doing it on my Sun workstation. DEC ULTRIX workstations are a notable exception, but I've been told this is a failing in ULTRIX rather than in IDL, and should be corrected with OSF/1.

Bill Thompson

Subject: Re: New IDL Update Policy
Posted by [bowman](#) on Mon, 07 Jun 1993 15:31:56 GMT
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I think that RSI's new update policy is perfectly understandable. They are in the business to make money, they have a good product, and they can charge what they want. I think that their past policy of free updates

(sans support) has been exceedingly generous. I am happy to pay the \$250/year fee for updates, although I would rather not have to pay the \$200 for support. I have used support in the past only for help with some undocumented features (CALL_EXTERNAL on the RS6000, for which a document now exists), and I like to think I have helped RSI by reporting some bugs. RSI has been one of the best software companies that I have ever had to deal with, and I strongly recommend it to friends. (Perhaps I should ask for a commission, since the Meteorology Dept. has bought a license, and I think Lassen Research is switching their commercial turnkey radar display software to IDL because of me. :-))

The price for new licenses, however, has pretty much moved out of our price range (for research grants to universities). We would like to buy a 6-user node locked license (\$4,500), since floating licenses and unlimited licenses are way out of reach, but we will have to wait. There are people in our immediate group, and in the department, who would like to use IDL, but I cannot support them on my single machine. Maybe next year we will have the funds. If floating licenses or node-locked licenses were \$500 each, we could buy several and add others as needed. I don't know whether RSI could make money at that price, but in our case they would make something rather than nothing.

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