Subject: PLEASE READ - Got PARIS components for a development rig?
Posted by kerryg on Sun, 25 May 2008 19:26:39 GMT
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Hi all. I was going to save this post for a bit longer until I had more info
to share, but it seems particularly timely today.

Sorry this is a bit long - the summary is at the end. But as I'm putting out
an appeal here, you should have full access to my "source code" :D

As my previous posts have implied, I've been busy contacting people in
various places about the possibilities of pushing PARIS forward. I've talked
to many companies/developers. Some names might surprise you. There are very
interesting avenues to pursue, and obstacles to overcome to get there.

Development involving the PARIS app itself (eg EDS plugins or the FaderWorks
PDC advances) looks to be in excellent hands courtesy of Mike Audet and
Dimitrios and others. I'm focusing my own efforts elsewhere - I'm
investigating what alternatives might exist for the PARIS hardware
independent of the PARIS app. This involves investigating things like what
driver options could be pursued; what alternative "front end" apps might
feasibly be adapted to access the PARIS hardware; and how we might obtain
the ability to import/migrate ppjs/pafs into another app to "future proof"
our access to our "back catalogs".

I can only promise I'm working hard in the background and have devoted many
hours already to the effort. I can't make promises on behalf of others, but
I see the bulk of items on my list as more "to do" items than a "wish list",
and if two minor goals I'm working towards happen then I'd rate at least one
of the developments (safeguarding our ppj/pafs) as both "fairly likely" and
"within a reasonably short timeframe".

BTW, I have already rejected some promising solutions that involved asking
the community for significant sums of money for development specific only to
PARIS. I've talked to genuinely interested developers, folks with great
track records and real good will who have offered me every break in the
book, but I don't propose taking the community down that road. I'm instead
seeking developers who will help for their own reasons. Like this one: Mike
Audet and I have independently estimated the PARIS userbase as some 400
users worldwide (I have recorded over 40 within the last few months amongst
the subset of PARIS users that post to the NG). Capturing a market of that
size is not insignificant for a smaller developer looking to build their
clientele - it can be worth them throwing some effort into investigating
making those people happy (particularly if the developer has existing code
that might merely need tweaking). And there are aspects of the PARIS
community that might make it more interesting to certain developers than raw
numbers might dictate.

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Here's the immediate obstacle I want to ask the community about.

Even the most interested developers can't do much for us if they don't have a PARIS rig - and in 2008 PARIS rigs aren't easy to run out and buy. Given our small size as a market, if we as a community are asking a developer to do things for us, then telling them "go out and source and purchase a PARIS rig so you can help us out" isn't gonna fly. Neither is promising a developer you'll get them access to a rig to test on without being sure you can deliver. If the community wants developers to work on PARIS, and those developers have to have a PARIS rig available in order to help us - then IMHO it's *in the community's best interest to provide one to them*.

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So this is a "feeler" post. IMHO the community needs a pre-assembled, "turnkey" (ie pre-installed on a computer) PARIS development rig, ready to be shipped to developers that could do it the most good (if you've guessed that I have destinations in mind to offer this to already - well, you're a good guesser :D).

Ideally this rig would be a multi-card, multi-MEC system containing at least one of every existing PARIS component we can get our hands on so PARIS can be thoroughly tested in larger configurations. No more of this "sorry, we didn't have a full system to test" thing. But as a start we'll settle for whatever we can lay our hands on.

In addition we'd need a PARIS community member who lives in the 48 contiguous states (to keep shipping costs and delays low) to volunteer to be the occasional "depot/shipping person". They'd be the person that received the donated components, tested them, assembled them into a rig, and sent it to where it needed to go, and if needed (although if it finds a long-term home fast, that's good news for us) receive it back and ship it elsewhere.

BTW, I'd do it myself in a heartbeat, but I'm in Canada - don't even ask what international shipping would add to the hassle and the cost and the delays. I've already had the first potential volunteer interest, and he's a name you've all known a long time, but we're clear that there are some commitments I need to obtain from others before we can ask him for his.

Incidentally, obviously I'm not proposing we stick that volunteer, whoever it winds up being, with picking up shipping/packing charges. I'd propose setting up something like a PayPal account for them in order to let the community chip in a few bucks apiece to cover any reasonable packing/shipping costs. I'd nag, too - these are trivial "beer money" costs for a community to absorb, rather than a lump for an individual.

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As mentioned, this is not an actual call for components yet - it's just an "assessment" call to determine if folks would give concrete support to this idea. I'd put everyone fully in the picture on *where* I was proposing it to go (and of course *why*) when I made the actual call for components.

PARIS hardware prices have plummeted so far that the gear's hardly worth selling now - ($25 for a C16? Feh, the faders in it are probably worth more than that as salvage!), and there's the possibility of very exciting developments if everything worked out well.

So if you're contemplating blowing PARIS gear out at absurd "it's gathering dust, make me an offer, just get it out of here" fire-sale prices anyway - a component or two, or an old but functional PARIS-equipped PC, or even a full rig - would you consider donating components to such a "development rig" effort instead?

In addition, would there be any interest in making a small donation to a community fund to purchase any components we're missing after we see what the donation call brings in? 27 MECs won't help us if we only have a single EDS card.

I've got no promises to give in exchange at this moment, except my own, that I'm working on things. But this is what's needed to get 'em done. Let me know what you think.

- Kerry Galloway