Subject: Object graphics - some questions

Posted by Neil Conway on Sun, 29 Mar 1998 08:00:00 GMT

(Can't find a FAQ for this group in news.answers, am I looking in the wrong place ?)

I have just found a reason to use IDL 5's object graphics system. I read the manual, liked the bit about objects in general, then read the bit about the graphics objects and then my pleasure started to diminish very rapidly.

My worries were soon to become disbelief. Unless I have grossly missed the point, object graphics is a dog, and cannot replace many functions of direct graphics.

I'd love someone to show me a way to do what I expected to be able to do 'out of the box' with object graphics... Here are the some of the problems I have hit already:

1. I use an 8-bit display, and almost all the X-terminals around my business are also 8-bit. When one brings up an object graphics (henceforth OG) window it takes (by default) nearly all the available colours to build an RGB map. When a second window comes up, it takes all the rest. I have found an option to use the indexed colour model, but it appears that each separate OG window uses a separate colour map, and thus one is doomed to have either very few colours per window, or the dreaded colour-map switching. OK, I could get around this by using 24-bit displays only (not an option for me, sadly).

2. When preparing output for a printer, incredibly, there appears to be no programmatic way to specify a given output device. Rather, one must use a dialog and ask the user to pick one. Furthermore, the range of output devices seems not to include the likes of CGM files, but just kosher print devices. Did I miss something here ?

3. Using (for example) the postscript output ("EPSF" output, but it's not encapsulated), I was horrified and bemused to discover that a simple sine-wave (the "simple plot" from the manual) uses up 200kB of disk space, because (brace yourself) it's written as a BITMAP (!?!?).
I simply can't get my head around that one.

Please tell me that I've been dreaming, and that all of these are surmountable problems... If not, then dOG will be stuck in its kennel for the foreseeable future in my books.

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(Email copies of followups appreciated, our proxy server is another
dog and thus getting to a news server is very traumatic)