

---

Subject: Re: Getting graphics output to Windows clipboard

Posted by [Peter Mason](#) on Fri, 24 Apr 1998 07:00:00 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

On Thu, 23 Apr 1998, Stephen Herman wrote:

> Can anyone direct me to the best way to get the contents of a graphics window  
> onto Windows clipboard in Win95 and WinNT? I would like to be able import such  
> graphics (plots and images) into other applications such as Powerpoint or  
> Word. Preferably, it should be done in such a way that I can rescale the  
> image at the destination by rescaling the window pasted from the clipboard.

If you really must use the clipboard as opposed to writing printfiles,  
then you could try this little suite of routines:

`ftp://demsyd.syd.dem.csiro.au/pub/mmtg/idl/winclip.zip`

There's one that will copy a \*BITMAP\* to the clipboard, given a window ID  
or draw widget value. I have to say that I didn't really take things  
that far with it - it's only for 8-bit display modes, and you probably  
won't "achieve the desired result" if your plot uses many colours on account  
of Windows' colour management.

Bitmaps really have a fixed resolution. I'd say that a bitmap format is fine  
for images, but it's not ideal for line plots. Although you can resize an  
imported bitmap in Word, this just effects a sub- or over-sampling of the  
original picture. e.g., Resized line plots usually look pretty awful.

I recommend that you try generating your plot to a plotfile in one of IDL's  
"non-raster" formats using SET\_PLOT and DEVICE.

Your best bet here is probably EPS. The main problem with EPS is that you  
won't be able to see your graphic within Word, not even in Print Preview.

EPS is strictly "along for the ride" in Word and Powerpoint - it's not fully  
imported. But you will be able to resize it and it will print, provided  
that your printer is Postscript. (It won't print on a non-Postscript  
printer.)

In the past we've also used HPGL, which I think is very good for simple plots  
that use few colours. Unfortunately, Office (97) doesn't seem to support it  
anymore.

We've more or less avoided CGM because Word and Powerpoint used to choke on  
even the simplest plots in CGM. (Well, er, also, I haven't been able import  
an IDL5 CGM into Word97 successfully, although I must say that I haven't tried  
that hard :-)

The format that would probably suit you best is Windows Metafile. It handles  
images and line plots well, is scalable, and is understood by many Windows  
programs. Unfortunately, IDL doesn't generate this format (yet).  
If enough of us request this feature, perhaps RSI will put it in.

Peter Mason

---