
Subject: Easy way to make hard copies at full printer resolution

Posted by [Kristian Kjaer](#) on Wed, 02 Sep 1998 07:00:00 GMT

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One thing that makes IDL somewhat inconvenient for `_interactive_` data display

and reduction is the lack of a command (equivalent to - dare I say it - `alt(File)...Print...` in Windows programs) to produce a hard copy of the current plot with the resolution offered by the printer.

There seem to be only the possibilities of

- * dumping the screen (resolution limited by screen) or
- * `set_plot,'ps'` & ; repeat all the previous plot-commands

In the (now sadly deceased) DOS-program GENPLOT printer-resolution hardcopy

was offered very simply and effectively by the program storing all the vector

strokes since the last screen erase. Then, something like

`GENPLOT> hc dev postscript`

would produce a *.ps file and optionally spool it.

Now, why doesn't IDL offer something similar, I wonder.

I thought about journaling everything and parsing the journal file to extract

a `redraw.pro` so that

`IDL> @redraw.pro`

would redraw the last plot on the currently selected device but this would

work poorly in case of, e.g.,

- * drawing to more than one window, or
- * `plot, <very complicated, time-consuming expression> ,or`
- * `plot,y & y=some_function(y) & oplot,y`

Then there is IDL5's 'Object Graphics'. I leafed through the manual and, from

what little I could understand, this rather takes the `_interactive_` out of

IDL.

Ideally I'd like to sit and type into the IDL command prompt, using native IDL

commands and my own (wrapper, mainly) routines and, when a useful plot has

resulted on the screen, make a hard copy of it without any extra trouble.

Does anyone have some ideas or some useful code?

- Thanks, Kristian
