
Subject: Re: power style labels

Posted by [davidf](#) on Sun, 10 Jan 1999 08:00:00 GMT

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

Stein Vidar Hagfors Haugan (steinhh@ulrik.uio.no) writes:

```
> Dave,
>
> I just cancelled a previous post where I had written:
>
>> Dave,
>>
>> Shimizu said he didn't want to use the [xyz]tickNAME keyword,
>> he didn't say anything about the [xyz]tickFORMAT keyword.
> [...]
>> Sure, dinner sounds good, since you decided to take up the
>> bet :-)
>
> Now that I've re-read the original question, I see that Shimizu
> did mention ytickformat:
>
>> ...I don't like to use following style.
>>> plot, [0, 1e4], ytickformat = '(e7.1)'
>
> However, I think what he meant was he didn't like the look of
> using ytickformat='(e7.1)', not that he wouldn't use ytickformat
> at all.... how about a draw?
```

This whole discussssion reminds me of my favorite pet peeve about technical support engineers. So many of them (like I did) answer the **question** rather than (like Stein Vidar did) solve the **problem**. And I suspect many of them do it for the same reason I did: there are not enough hours in the day to do everything that needs doing. Answering questions is quite a bit easier than solving problems. :-)

But the number one rule of technical support, it seems to me, is that the question is almost always indicative of confusion, not clear thinking. If most bright people think clearly about a problem, they can usually solve it on their own. Thus, just answering the question is often not all that helpful. The best support engineers, like Stein Vidar, anticipate the problem behind the question and work to solve that. Often the problem is nothing more than fuzzy (or incomplete) thinking on the part of the user.

In any case, I'll be happy to spring for dinner the next

time I'm in Oslo because no matter which question you answer--
the one asked or the one anticipated--I almost always
learn something worth knowing. :-)

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting

Phone: 970-221-0438 E-Mail: davidf@dfanning.com

Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>

Toll-Free IDL Book Orders: 1-888-461-0155
