Subject: NLEVELS doesn't necessarily mean NLEVELS
Posted by davidf on Mon, 12 Apr 1999 07:00:00 GMT
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Hi Folks,

In playing around with filled contours for a couple of new articles I put up on my web page recently I encountered an interesting problem. I took a simple data set from the LoadData program you can find on my web page:

```
peak = LoadData(1)
```

Then I did this:

```
Contour, peak, NLevels=12
```

But what I noticed was that IDL was actually drawing only 9 contour levels, not 12. Humm.

I contacted RSI technical support and learned that contrary to what the IDL documentation claims, the NLEVELS keyword does not divide the data range into "this number of equally spaced contour intervals". Rather, this is taken as a (I'm not kidding) "suggestion" to the CONTOUR command, and the CONTOUR command can apparently do what it likes with the suggestion. Including, as I understand it, put it where the sun don't shine.

I'm told by technical support that if I really want 12 contour levels I can either calculate them myself (yes, I knew this, which is the *point* of my two articles) or I could increase the number of levels with the NLEVELS keyword. He didn't have a suggestion as to what I should increase the number *to* in order to get 12 levels, but presumably a number between 12 and 20 would do it. :-(

Cheers,

David

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