
Subject: Re: Colors again!

Posted by [Liam Gumley](#) on Tue, 22 Jun 1999 07:00:00 GMT

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Harald Frey wrote:

```
> My idl_startup.pro file contains the device,decomposed=0 line and after
> starting
> IDL I get the information
>
> IDL> print, 'Number of colors is ', !d.n_colors
> Number of colors is      256
> IDL> plot,findgen(200)
> IDL> print,!d.n_colors
>      106
```

Until you actually create a window with PLOT, IDL has not tried to grab any colors from the desktop. You need to put a command like this in your startup file:

```
window, /free, /pixmap & wdelete, !d.window
```

Then at least the correct number of colors will be reported. Or you could try my COLORSET routine, which is available at <http://cimss.ssec.wisc.edu/~gumley/colortools.html>

```
> After any plot command the number of available colors is cut by more
> than half, and this number changes from day to day between 118 and 104,
> maybe depending on the weather.
> It may be a problem of my machine and not of IDL. If I force my CDE
> Style Manager-Color to "Most Colors for Applications" then I get 211 colors in
> IDL but the screen looks very colorless. Right now it is set to "More Colors
> for Applications".
```

This seemingly random behavior is caused by your desktop. If you have applications like Netscape running before you start IDL, IDL will have many fewer colors to work with. On our local machines which run CDE, we always set the Style Manager to 'Most Colors for Applications'. However we still get the behavior you described when a second IDL session is started. This is a result of having an 8 bit desktop. On our Sun Ultra machines (which are supposed to have Creator3D 24 bit graphics cards), we've been unable to figure out how to get around this problem (has anyone solved this?).

On the other hand my SGI box has a 24 bit graphics card, and it handles multiple 8 bit IDL sessions just fine: the color tables don't interfere with one another.

Sorry I can't be of more help....

Cheers,
Liam.

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