
Subject: Re: Prevent color flashing
Posted by [davidf](#) on Mon, 01 Nov 1999 08:00:00 GMT
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Patrick L. Nolan (pln@egret1.stanford.edu) writes:

- > I'm writing my first IDL widget program. I have various editions
- > of the IDL manuals and also David Fanning's book.

Forget the manuals if you want to learn widget programming. :-)

- > I'm plugging
- > along, learning lots of useful things. There's one annoying thing
- > I haven't been able to figure out. I have a drawing window, and
- > I'm using it to display simple monochrome PLOT output. This is
- > running on machine with an 8-bit display, so IDL uses a private color
- > table. The colors flash in the most annoying way when the cursor
- > moves in and out of the IDL window. Is there some way to prevent this?

I suspect there is something going on that you may not be aware of. There is no way that IDL should be getting a private color map like this normally.

There are generally three reasons for this:

1. The number of IDL colors is set in an X Resource file:

```
Idl.colors = 245
```

Here IDL wants 245 colors, but there may not be this many colors in the shared color map, so IDL obtains a private color map.

2. The number of colors is set in an IDL startup file.

```
Window, Colors=256  
WDelete, !D.Window
```

Here IDL gets a private color map because there is no way to get a shared color map with 256 colors on an 8-bit computer running a Window system.

3. You have NetScape running when you start up IDL.

NetScape likes a LOT of colors, just like IDL. If NetScape is running when IDL starts up, there are no colors left in the shared color map and IDL gets a private color map. The solution is to tell NetScape

to restrict its color consumption (I always forget how, but it's simple).

I'd do this. Examine your .XDefaults file (as well as any system .XDefaults file that may come into play) for anything resembling `Idl.colors` and remove it. Then I would make sure the `IDL_STARTUP` environment variable wasn't pointing to a file. Then I'd quit any browser I was running.

Then, I'd start up IDL and open a window:

```
IDL> Window
```

Then send us the results of `HELP, /DEVICE` and let's see if we can figure out what is going on. In the meantime, read about the `Colors` keyword to the `Window` command to see if setting this parameter (say to `-10`) will help your situation. Remember that the number of colors in your IDL session (and, hence, the type of color map you get) is determined when the `FIRST` graphics window is opened up. Can't do anything about it after that.

Cheers,

David

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

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