
Subject: Re: IDL i/o on G4

Posted by [John-David T. Smith](#) on Fri, 16 Mar 2001 16:48:34 GMT

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Dirk Fabian wrote:

>
> In article <3AB152F6.48743F25@astro.cornell.edu>,
> JD Smith <jdsmith@astro.cornell.edu> wrote:
>> "Dmitri A. Sergatskov" wrote:
>>
>>>
>>>> I should think a G4 titanium with OSX would be just about the fastest
>>>> laptop for running IDL available, but only if RSI is on the ball and has
>>>> a version ready when it hits prime time (sometime this summer, though
>>>> the release is next week).
>>>>
>
> [snip]
>
>>
>> I have used almost exclusively Linux IDL. I find it very stable. The
>> problem you refer to has to do with hardware and the free X display
>> servers, not IDL, and has been (partially) alleviated with XFree86
>> v4.0. It's the inability to simultaneously *overlay* an 8-bit
>> pseudo-color visual on a native 24-bit Truecolor session. Usually you
>> want to do this to accomodate a program written in a color-depth
>> specific way (yes David, it is a crime). Overlay functionality has been
>> typical of most unix workstation video hardware for a long time, but has
>> only recently been catching on among standard PC components. The Matrox
>> cards are a good example.

> I haven't been keeping up with the characteristics of the new Xfree
> distributions. Is it possible to have multiple visual classes on the
> same screen, or do I still need to start another session in 8bit mode?
> Xfree86 development seems to have nearly ground to halt over the past 2
> years, and it was my understanding that version 4 didn't end up having
> overlay capabilities despite advertisement to the contrary. What's the
> scoop?

Hey Dirk, how's wisconsin livin'? The idea of overlays is to have two visual classes operating at once. You can also start another X server with a different visual and have it directed to the same display, with xnest for example -- not exactly convenient, but works for almost any hardware, I think.

Try "xdpyinfo" for a list of visual modes available. If all you see is a Truecolor/Directcolor 24 bit entry, then you're out of luck. I believe the Matrox cards (mga driver) have the best (only?) support for

this under XF864.

A more relevant question starts to be, how logical is it to jump through so many hoops to keep writing and using 8-bit psuedocolor applications? I think we need an entirely new color model, one which takes full advantage of the better capabilities of modern video hardware. There must be better ideas out there. Device, decomposed=0 is just an interim solution, which is actually more crippling than a pure PseudoColor visual. I wonder what tack other color-heavy processing software has taken?

JD
