
Subject: MPI_Plot Was: Something else
Posted by [davidf](#) on Wed, 28 Mar 2001 01:22:56 GMT
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Folks,

I announced earlier today that Martin and I were making our program MPI_PLOT available to help users get their plots configured to their liking. The software was not out there for 10 minutes before the whini... excuse me, before the comments started coming in. Thank you. :-)

So, of course there is already an upgrade available. (There really are some advantages to free software.) The latest version of the software is available as a zip file from here:

http://www.dfanning.com/programs/mpi_plot.zip

The latest update addresses two concerns. First, people wanted a way to "save" the plot configuration, so it could be used with subsequent plots. I've implemented this in a fairly limited way for now. (Check back tomorrow for a full solution. The chances are good I'll lose my tennis match tonight and be up until the wee hours feeling sorry for myself and writing programs.) For now, users can use a KEYWORDS keyword to assign a variable to accept the PLOT keywords MPI_PLOT is using to create the plot in the display window. Something like this:

```
IDL> MPI_PLOT, data, KEYWORDS=pkeywords  
IDL> PLOT, moredata, _Extra=pkeywords
```

Used in this way, MPI_PLOT is sort of a "master plot" configuration application. (Getting the kind of plot MPI_PLOT produces is slightly more complicated than this, but the code is exposed for all to see, and it is explained in the internal documentation for the program.)

What you may notice, which is way cool in my opinion, is that the variable "pkeywords" is *continuously* updated by the MPI_PLOT program. In other words, if you make a change in the MPI_PLOT configuration, your variable immediately knows about it at the IDL command line. You understand, right, that MPI_PLOT is a non-blocking widget that is sitting on your display and you can change the configuration whenever you like. So, don't even ask me how this is done. (I'll give you a clue, it has

nothing to do with common blocks.) Just think of it as total IDL magic. :-)

The second feature asked for was PostScript output. So, all right, I added a PostScript option to the Save button. I'll warn you right now, though, that what you are likely to see in the PostScript file is *exactly* what you see in the display window. Again, don't ask. It's how I make my living and I'm not giving these secrets away for free!

And while I was doing this, I decided what the heck, I'd even improve the PRINT capability so that I can print the darn thing on either my B&W Lexmark laser printer, or my nifty HP 970Cse color printer.

So, there you go. Martin will be happy to take other comments. (I guess Martin has had some kind of object epiphany today, if I read my recent e-mail from him correctly. I have a feeling he is far beyond IDL PLOT commands. :-)

Cheers,

David

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