Subject: Re: controlling plot appearance (was "line graph problems")
Posted by Paul van Delst on Tue, 27 Mar 2001 18:33:46 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Craig Markwardt wrote:
>
> Martin Schultz <martin.schultz@dkrz.de> writes:
>> You speak "out of my heart" here. And this is exactly the reason why
>> David went ahead recently to develop a graphical tool to set up plot
>> properties. Since it concentrates on getting the correct values for
>> the myriad of plot keywords, it is not necessarily more "intuitive"
>> than these, but at least you get "instant gratification" in that you
>> can see what effect a keyword setting has. But if you are a little
>> more "anal" in the ay things should look (this is a quote from several
>> posts of David), there is really no way around messing with character
>> sizes and positions - and here, IDL (at least in direct graphics) does
>> a rather lousy job in providing the user with reasonable defaults or
>> an easy reference frame. What is clearly missing, I think, is a
>> "panel" coordinate system which would have "normal" coordinates with
>> respect to a plot, not to the entire window or page.
> ... other requests removed
>
> I hear you Martin, and I agree with you. We need more control over
> our plots sometimes.
>
> It dawned on me that we may not need *more* keywords to PLOT. Rather,
> there should be a simple way to piece together a plot from simple
> primitives.

For me, that's exactly what I *don't* want to do.

> AXIS is a good start be we need other primitives to
> establish coordinate systems and perform data scaling.

Argh. Who wants to establish coordinate systems explicitly everytime they make a plot? It
would be like using, oh, OG. :o)

Data scaling I already do using the '*' operator, as in "scale_factor * x_data" :o)

> Instead of
> shoehorning more stuff into a monolithic plot command,

Emotive words. I prefer the "addition" of more "features" to produce a more "flexible"
plot command.

> In any case, I don't think it matters. RSI probably considers direct
> graphics to be the wave of the past.

Nuts - I was afraid someone was going to bring that up. Still, if RSI does plan this and if they do do it, I sure hope they make it transparent to the DG users, i.e. all the old code still works the same way. I guess I'd better start learning some other handy-dandy language anyway just in case. sigh.

Come to think of it, I wonder what RSI sees as its "user base" of the future? Programmers who put together large project whiz-bang widgets thingoes or non-programmers who just want to look at line plots/surface/images *quickly* to gain some insight into their data? One of the best things about IDL, I reckon, is when someone gives me a data file, I read it in in about 30 seconds, then display a plot, surface, or image in about 2 seconds. The eye-widening, jaw-dropping, "howdyadothat?" look is becoming rarer what with scientist folk becoming more familiar with IDL-like tools, but it still happens every now and again. :o)

paulv

--
Paul van Delst   A little learning is a dangerous thing;
CIMSS @ NOAA/NCEP   Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring;
Ph: (301)763-8000 x7274 There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
Fax:(301)763-8545   And drinking largely sobers us again.
paul.vandelst@noaa.gov   Alexander Pope.