Subject: Re: Publication-quality plots
Posted by K. Bowman on Thu, 03 Jun 2004 15:20:47 GMT

In article <4a097d6a.0406022302.67f74fd6@posting.google.com>,
 MKatz843@onebox.com (M. Katz) wrote:

> (A Voice from Mac-land...)
> The "no-joy" Mac users have is the sinking feeling we get when
> opening MS Office docs full of Windows Metafile graphics in the Mac
> versions of MS Office. Though they advertise and hype interoperability
> and cross-platform blah blah blah, it never quite works, and Windows
> metafiles often don't translate well to the Mac. Sometimes it's fine,
> but it's not reliable.

This will obviously date me, but I have written scientific papers with:
a typewriter, Script (mainframe text processing tool), a $20k dedicated
word processor, MacWrite, WriteNow, Word, and now finally TeX. I was
delighted when WYSIWYG word processors came along (e.g., MacWrite). No
more embedding codes, etc. Microsoft gradually drove everyone else out
of the business, though, through their overwhelming monopoly in the
business world. (I know there are a few alternatives, but generally no
one else can use the files.) I used Word for quite a while, hating it
all the time. It is sad to see what poor design has done to a good idea
(WYSIWYG), not to mention the fact that Word frequently crashes for me
when dealing with imported graphics.

I finally bit the bullet and switched to TeX. There are several great,
free, implementations for OS X. (I use TeXShop.) It does take a while
to learn the basic formatting commands, but it is fast, outputs directly
to PDF, and imports PDF graphics without a problem. Moreover, some
journals give you a break if you provide electronic copy in TeX format.
I generate PS graphics in IDL, tweak in Illustrator if needed, convert
to PDF one of several ways (Illustrator or pstopdf), and import into TeX.

I even do presentations in TeX -- output to PDF and use the slide show
option of Acrobat Reader to show them.

I still have Word, but only to read all of the documents that other
people send me. I am sure that Microsoft will change something in the
Word file format and force us all to buy new versions before long.

Ken Bowman