
Subject: Re: Zooming in place

Posted by [Rick Towler](#) on Tue, 01 Nov 2005 19:50:12 GMT

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Paul Van Delst wrote:

> Rick Towler wrote:

>> Paul Van Delst wrote:

>>

>>> One GUI who's functionality I have always wanted in IDL for both
>>> regular old x-y plots and images is that of map zooms like you see at
>>> yahoo or msn. You can click and zoom (with a little indicator on the
>>> side telling you your "zoom level") or you can turn off the zoom once
>>> you've achieved your required level and the click just recenters the
>>> display (or you have buttons at the N-S-E-W edges, and corners). One
>>> thing I always find when looking at data in IDL is that once I've
>>> zoomed (via rubber-band) to the level I want, I would like to
>>> traverse my plot. The only way I can do that now is to unzoom (right
>>> button click) and then zoom in again on a different part of my plot.
>>> It works, but unfortunately I no longer have the luxury of time to
>>> further develop my simple tool (I thought the yearly maintenance fee
>>> would be a good substitute but, alas, that scenario hasn't
>>> eventuated), and, jeez, this is the 21st century for pete's sake.
>>> :o) When I look over the shoulder of matlab users they're zooming
>>> and moving and bee-bopping all over the place! I think I'm developing
>>> data-language envy :o(actually, :o)

>>

>>

>>

>> Can you say "iTools"?

>

>

> I refrained from it in my original post, but, yes I can: @*\$^@%\$#%&!

>

> :o)

>

> I've found the iTools stuff to be some of the most counter-intuitive
> GUIs I have ever used for displaying data. And it's just too slow. We
> get PC upgrades about every 3 or so years - I've got about 1 year to go
> and just using iPlot to zoom a 10^6 point $y=x^2$ plot is agonizingly slow
> compared to my simple, brain-dead wplot routine. I don't think it's
> reasonable for me to have to get a new PC just so some new features work
> fast enough when I know similar functionality is already available (from
> v5 onwards). And, frankly, given the heritage of iTools, I'm not
> surprised. Can anyone say Insight? Or Live_Tools?

>

> I was going to continue my rant (blood pressure rising...) about all the
> effort on the OO stuff at the expense of just about everything else, but
> my iPlot just finished displaying (sans axes I might add....oh, there

> they are). So, I'm going to zoom in, go get a coffee while that
> cogitation is occurring, and then print the plot to a PostScript
> file.... hang on, there's no PS option. Bummer.

I have to admit I was trolling a bit.

I knew I would at least get a small rise out of David. :) (He really didn't bite though. I think he is still high from his T-shirt experience.) Whether you love 'em or hate 'em, the iTools are RSI's response to gui based plot editors like MATLAB's figure window and let's be honest, something like this is sorely needed in IDL. Task 10 computer literate, but not so familiar with IDL or MATLAB, people with generating 10 figures forcing them to create the first 2 in IDL and MATLAB respectively and I bet that without iTools all 10 will do the last 8 in MATLAB.

And I agree Paul that iTool performance is abysmal (FTR, I'm running 6.1 and I know performance enhancements have been made in 6.2) but I think your jab at the OO/OG system is a bit unfair. IDL needed a new graphics subsystem and I couldn't imagine developing an application today without OG. I think what has been overlooked are the "value added" routines for object graphics. Classes and functions that sit somewhere in between the OG primitives and iTools that allow the more casual user to exploit OG in a manner similar to the DG system. For example, an IDLgrPlot subclass that actually provides axes (imagine that). Or an IDLgrView subclass that automagically displays its contents. Or XOBJVIEW on steroids. And your dream zoom tool would be easy to implement in OG. Why it doesn't ship with IDL is beyond me.

But back to iTools. I, maybe foolishly, still think that the performance and UI issues can be worked out. But maybe they can't be and iTools will go the way of Live_Tools and many person hours of development will be wasted and IDL will fall back into its niche awaiting the next attempt to claw its way out to a broader audience.

-Rick
