
Subject: Re: WIN device color and backgnd reset after set_plot command

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 26 Jan 2006 09:56:46 GMT

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guillaume.drolet.1@ulaval.ca writes:

> I edited my startup script like this (as David's suggest):

>

> !p.background = fsc_color('white')

> !p.color = fsc_color('Navy')

Uh, I don't remember any discussion about a startup script. I was suggesting you do this before you draw graphics in whatever device you find yourself in. And *especially* you need to do it if you switch from a 24-bit device to an 8-bit device, and back, since colors are represented differently in those environments.

I personally don't use these system variables for ANY colors I care about, mostly for this non-equivalence between devices. I try to load my color tables *before* I draw graphics, and I explicitly stay away from color indices 0 and 255, mostly because these are used by !P.Color and !P.Background in this perverse way you are discovering. :-)

> But the same thing keep happening when I switch from WIN to PS and then
> to WIN again: the plot background and color previously set in my
> startup script are resetted to IDL defaults (i.e. black background and
> white color, which I don't like).

>

> Since I usually plot long expressions, I don't to have to specify plot
> color and background every time I plot data after coming back PS device
> to WIN device.

>

> Again, any useful advice is welcome.

Well, this unhappiness is caused by the odd behavior of the PostScript device. It switches foreground and background colors, then completely ignores the background color. ("You can have any background color you like in PostScript as long as it is white.") Then, when it switches back, it mindlessly sets !P.Color to what had previously been !P.Background and sets !P.Background to 0.

Why? I don't know why. The gods decreed it at some

time in the past and that's the way it is. Get used to it, is my advice. I think it falls under the category of "direct graphics", which I understand to read "hopeless". :-)

Knowing this, of course, allows you to work around it. Most of us build "wrappers" that allow us to switch from our graphics device back to our display device, and visa versa. We change the thickness of plots, the fonts, and all of the myriad other things we have to tweak to work around this creaky system. Here is another thing to go in there.

Cheers,

David

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Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>
