
Subject: Re: IDL's EPS thumbnail image
Posted by [Troy Klein](#) on Thu, 03 Aug 1995 07:00:00 GMT
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Here's some additional info about using IDL's EPS output.

By using the packages described my previous reply/post you can create a plain postscript file with IDL, process it with the software in the packages, ftp the result to a Mac or PC, and then paste/import the resulting EPSF file into your Mac/PC application of choice that recognizes EPSF files.

This allows you to:

- 1) view a low resolution image of the IDL postscript in your application
- 2) easily add annotation to the IDL graphics
- 3) cover up any unwanted part of the IDL graphics
- 4) print with the same resolution as the original postscript
- 5) keep all your IDL graphics together in a single document
- 6) easily find and reuse IDL graphics if needed

This is how I do all my IDL graphics now. Rather than mess with all the graphical formatting keywords and options in IDL, I simply use it to get the basic graph or image into postscript and then I add most of the annotation with Powerpoint or MacDraw Pro on a Macintosh. This allows you to interactively add/modify the annotation without having to reproduce the IDL graphics over and over again. In fact I can do all of this on my HP 735 with MAE (Macintosh Application Environment) from Apple. MAE is essentially MacOS that runs in an X window. If you have access to the World Wide Web check out <http://www.mae.apple.com/>.

Once the IDL graphics is in a document, I can print selected pages or copy and paste them into other documents. You can even scale the graphics if you wish. You can mix the graphics into a report or into presentation slides.

Now about the packages. I think the best way to track down the Mac packages right now is at the Web page <http://vsl.cnet.com/cgi-bin/shase>. This page allows you to search the software archives for various platforms by filename or description. If you don't have Web access, then the packages can be ftp'd from a mirror of the umi-mac archive, mirror.aol.com in the directories [/pub/mac/util/text/](#) and [/pub/mac/util/unix/](#). The PC package unfortunately doesn't turn up in the archive search, so you have to turn to Archie. A good Archie Web interface that I use is at <http://hoohoo.ncsa.uiuc.edu/archie.html>. One of the places it found ps2epsf is at <ftp://cs.orst.edu> in the directory [/localsrc/graphics](#).

Even though I haven't personally tried the PC package ps2epsf, I expect it to work as well as the Mac packages because the Mac packages were derived from ps2epsf. The difference between the Mac packages is ps2epsmac was written for UNIX and ps2epsplus was compiled for Mac. ps2epsplus is nice because it has a

friendly Mac interface, however if you have a 6 year old Mac like me, it going to run fairly slow. That's why I use ps2epsmac. If you have some complicated IDL graphics (contour plots, surface plots and images for example) it could mean minutes on the Mac instead of seconds on a UNIX box.

A couple notes:

The documentation for ps2epsmac claims that the color preview has 8 bit resolution. For my particular setup I have found this to not be the case, it's more like 3 or 4 bits. As it turns out I think this better because the file is smaller, yet I still get enough different colors to figure out what is what in the picture. Also I had to modify the main shell script file to get a fitted bounding box around the graphics and a color preview at the same time. You can get a color preview with the original script but must stick with the original bounding box in the postscript file.

Hope this info helps you produce some really nice looking IDL output. Troy.
