
Subject: Re: IDL's EPS thumbnail image
Posted by [Troy Klein](#) on Wed, 02 Aug 1995 07:00:00 GMT
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The following is a question and answer I'm going to forward to the maintainer of the IDL FAQ.

Question:

Why don't my desktop PC applications recognize the preview portion of IDL EPSI files?

Answer:

Quoting the IDL version 4.0 online help for the PREVIEW keyword, "Set this keyword to add a 'device independent screen preview' to the PostScript output file, in encapsulated PostScript interchange format (EPSI). Use this keyword only with encapsulated output. Many, but certainly not all, desktop publishing and word processing programs will display this screen preview when the file is imported into a document."

The EPSI format is not compatible with some of the more popular Windows and Macintosh applications. Windows applications expect the preview image to be in TIFF format and Macintosh applications expect the preview image to be in PICT format and in the resource fork of the EPS file. I have found the EPSI file to be compatible with Framemaker for UNIX/X windows.

There are two workarounds available for Mac users and one for Windows users, all are similar. If you are using IDL on a UNIX machine, there is a package available (as of 8/2/95) on the popular University of Michigan Mac shareware/freeware archive titled "ps2epsmac," which uses Ghostscript and NetPBM on a UNIX machine to interpret the postscript and create a new EPS file in Macbinary format with the PICT preview. There are several Mac programs available (StuffitExpander, Fetch, etc.) to interpret the Macbinary file. I have had great success in using this method to import IDL EPS files into Word, Powerpoint, and MacDraw Pro. There is a similar package at the archive titled "ps2epsplus" which does the same thing, but all on a Mac.

For UNIX IDL users trying to import IDL EPS files into Windows applications, there is a package called "ps2epsf" which can be located using an Archie search. This package essentially does the same thing as the UNIX/Mac package but produces an EPS file with a TIFF preview.

I hope this information helps. Troy.

P.S. Below is a message to and from RSI/IDL support about the EPSI incompatibility.

From support@rsinc.com Mon Mar 6 16:08 EST 1995
Return-Path: <support@rsinc.com>
Date: Mon, 6 Mar 1995 13:39:22 -0700 (MST)
From: RSI email support <support@rsinc.com>
To: Troy Klein <troy.klein@aplmail.jhuapl.edu>
Cc: "Kevin G. Jackson" <wk09458@worldlink.com>
Subject: Re: FW: EPS Preview

> From: Troy Klein
> To: info
> Subject: EPS Preview
> Date: Thursday, March 02, 1995 12:38PM
>
> As of version 3.6.1 of IDL, the preview portion of encapsulated postscript
> output does not appear to be compatible with Macintosh and PC applications. I
> believe this is because Macintosh applications expect the preview to have
> the
> PICT format and PC applications expect the preview to have the TIFF format
> instead of the "device independent screen preview" that IDL currently uses.
>
> There is a workaround by using the freely available programs ghostscript,
> netpbm, ps2epsmac (for Macintosh EPS files) and ps2epsf (for PC EPS files).
> These programs are available at many FTP sites on the Internet.
>
> I would like to know if version 4.0 of IDL contains any improvements for EPS
> output (i.e. does it produce EPS files with previews that are compatible
> with
> Mac's and/or PC's ?). If not, are there any improvements planned for the
> near
> future?
>
> If version 4.0 has no improvements and none are planned, then I will suggest
> to Ray Sterner (maintainer of the IDL FAQ) that he add some information to
> the IDL FAQ regarding the workaround, metioned above, for importing EPS
> files
> on personal computers.
>
> Thanks.
> Troy Klein
> Johns Hopkins University / Applied Physics Laboratory
> troy.klein@jhuapl.edu
>

Troy,

Our initial notes entry for the preview feature notes that this may
be the case for some programs:

There is a new keyword, PREVIEW, for the PostScript driver. The PostScript driver will now optionally add to the output file a "device independent screen preview", in encapsulated PostScript interchange format (EPSI). Use this keyword only with encapsulated output. Many, but certainly not all, desktop publishing and word processing programs will display this screen preview with the document. ...

I believe this format preview was chosen as the best alternative to satisfy as many programs as possible. At present I know of no changes to this area. Thanks for passing on your suggestions, however. I'll forward your suggestions on so that perhaps this area can be improved in the future.

Regards,

Alan

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|Christina at (303) 786-9900 or Email training@rsinc.com|
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