
Subject: Re: Making movies

Posted by [Kenneth P. Bowman](#) on Sun, 19 Nov 2006 04:07:50 GMT

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In article <q6O7h.6144\$7G4.5036@newsfe22.lga>,
Jeff Hester <jhester@asu.edu> wrote:

> Does anyone have a preferred solution on a Mac for stringing a bunch of
> frames together to make a movie? I've never really liked the MPEG
> routines in IDL for a variety of reasons (everything from quality of
> output to inconsistencies in the movie headers that can cause them to
> play incorrectly when launched from PowerPoint). Macs are supposed to
> be god's gift to movies, so I am certain that there are 10^4 ways of
> making a movie out of a few hundred TIFF files, but I'd settle for one
> that will make a high quality output with a sensible codec and variable
> frame rate.
>
> Thanks,
> Jeff

I'll try to get around to adding this to the MacTips web page.

<http://idl.tamu.edu/mactips.php>

Here is the short version.

I don't currently have a good programmatic solution from inside IDL, but
there are at least two easy ways to do it using external apps.

First, in IDL, write all the frames into a directory in some
obvious sequence like

```
WRITE_PNG, 'frame_' + STRING(i, FORMAT = "(I4.4)") + '.png'
```

I much prefer PNGs to TIFFs (8- and 24-bit, good lossless compression,
no MPEG artifacts, public domain, ...)

Once the frames are created, use GraphicConverter or QuickTime Pro to
make the frames into a movie.

GraphicConverter is an outstanding shareware program that will convert
between virtually any two graphic formats. Choose Convert & Modify from
the File menu. On the left, navigate to the directory containing the frames.
Select all the frames that you want in the movie. On the right, navigate to
the directory where you want the movie to go. Set the Dest. Format to
QuickTime (.mov). Click the Options button and select the PNG compressor.
Set the frame rate. Turn off Key frames. Click OK to get back to the
Convert & Modify dialog. Click Go. You may need to wait after it finishes

reading the files for the QuickTime movie to be created (depends on number and size of frames).

Last, pay the shareware fee for GraphicConverter. :-)

You can also do this with Apple's QuickTime, but you have to pay Apple the \$20 or whatever to "upgrade" QuickTime to QuickTime Pro.

Ken Bowman
