

---

Subject: Re: basic question about graphic devices  
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Tue, 10 Apr 2007 14:54:03 GMT  
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

Sverre Solberg writes:

- > I have never understood why it's always been so complicated making
- > very simple plots in idl, while at the same time there's the
- > possibilities of making very complicated GUIs at a fairly small amount
- > of programming.

Ah, one of the eternal mysteries... :-)

- > Whats the best/easiest way of producing simple line plots (by the plot
- > command in direct graphics) that is scalable, shows up well as a
- > preview in e.g. Word documents and that are suited for printing in a
- > offset-press environment?

Except for the "preview" part, which you have already discovered sucks, I think most people use PostScript for this. There are a couple of options for making previews, but they all involve software other than IDL:

[http://www.dfanning.com/tips/postscript\\_preview.html](http://www.dfanning.com/tips/postscript_preview.html)

- >
- > I have got into a practice of using cgm for this, followed by a "brush-
- > up" of the cgm file by some sort of graphics program afterwards.

Uh, isn't CGM a 1970ish solution!?

- > Whatever the reason is, it's really
- > frustrating that one may spend lots of time for such things that
- > should be very simple.

Well, it's not so hard to write graphics programs that work in both PostScript and on the display without difficulty. You can find numerous examples on my web page, I would guess, since I try to write all my graphics programs that way.

I've learned to live without previews. If I want to see a real preview, I usually just create a PDF file from the PostScript output and look at that.

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.  
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>  
Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

---