
Subject: Re: The usage of PS_END

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 06 Oct 2008 12:41:01 GMT

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jlglover@gmail.com writes:

- > While we are discussing these programs, I might ask the filename
- > keyword works paths. If I call ps_start like this:
- >
- > ps_start,filename='plot.ps'
- >
- > the plot will sometimes appear in the directory of the program that
- > calls ps_start and sometimes it appears in my home directory.
- > Sometimes it even appears in the directory that stores ps_start.pro.
- > Does anyone (David perhaps) have any advice about how to control where
- > the output of ps_start appears? I am using IDL 7.0 on a Mac.

As a matter of fact, I do know something about this.

It appears to me, although I haven't confirmed this theory, that there is a difference in how IDL 7 handles file names. It used to be, for example, that in most of IDL's file name machinery, you could use forward or backward slashes interchangeably.

And while this appears still to be true for *some* of the IDL routines, it is clearly *NOT* true for Dialog_Pickfile.

On Windows machines, at least, if you set the opening path with forward slashes, Dialog_Pickfile ignores the PATH variable and opens the file in the directory that was *last* opened in that IDL session.

I found this out because I was starting to be confused by PSConfig, too. So, this past weekend I looked into it, and I traced the problem to FSC_FileSelect, which is what I use to select files in PSConfig. FSC_FileSelect was routinely changing back slashes to forward slashes whenever it had to work with directory names, which was fairly often. I am not sure now exactly *why* I thought that was a good idea all those years ago when I wrote that program, but it is clearly not a good idea now, so I have stripped all that code out of the program. (Actually, I just commented it out, because clearly I meant to do it for some reason, and absent the reason, I am reluctant to commit 100 percent in the opposite direction.)

It now appears to work consistently, as long as the user specifies the directory name in a way that is consistent with good practice for that particular operating system. However,

if the path is incorrect (maybe you have misspelled the directory name), then Windows still uses the last opened directory in Dialog_Pickfile.

So, if I were you, I think I would download a new copy of the Coyote Library. I think I would do this anyway, since I have made at least 20-30 changes to the library in the past couple of weeks, including numerous changes to PSConfig. You can find it here:

<http://www.dfanning.com/programs/coyoteprograms.zip>

I would encourage everyone to do this whose library is older than, say, yesterday. :-)

Cheers,

David

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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.")
