
Subject: A Simple IDL Manifesto

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 17 Nov 2008 17:50:06 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Folks,

On my way to work this morning, after I my German lesson gelearnt, I started thinking about simple things ITTVIS could do to improve the IDL experience for old and new users of IDL alike. My criteria for my list is that it had to be something a junior ITTVIS software engineer could accomplish in a lazy afternoon, while knocking back a couple of cold Brewskis.

Here is the list:

1. Make the COLOR keyword default to 1 for the PostScript device. The last time I wanted two-color PostScript output was in 1964, and if I want it now I can draw in black and white colors.
2. Make the BITS_PER_PIXEL keyword for the PostScript device default to 8. Setting it to 4 probably made sense in the 18th century (I'm speaking metaphorically in computer time, of course), but it makes absolutely no sense today.
3. Get rid of the TRUE keyword on the TV command. If you don't know how to tell if an image is a 2D or a true-color image, I'm certain Liam can enlighten you.
4. Add a POSITION keyword to the TV command so you don't have to spend an afternoon figuring out who to overlay an image with some information.
5. Oh, the hell with it, ditch the TV command and incorporate TVIMAGE or IMGDISP in it's place. (Personally, I would vote for IMGDISP.) That way you could have axes and everything else, too.
6. Make square-bracket array subscripting the default. Craig will get used to it, believe me.
7. Make the NAN keyword default to 1 everywhere. Why not!?
8. I realize it is difficult to tell when you are staring at a piece of paper just ejected from the printer, but make the LANDscape PostScript output LANDscape and not SEAscape. You can tell, all the time, when you view the PS output in GhostView.

9. Make UNXI computers default to TRUECOLOR visuals instead of DIRECTCOLOR. Oh, wait... this is already done. Hurray! Scratch this one from the list.

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming (www.dfanning.com)

Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")
