
Subject: Creating Transparent PNG Images
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Fri, 23 Oct 2009 18:53:30 GMT
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Folks,

I have a question about transparent PNG images. If you go somewhere on the Internet and look for a transparent PNG image, you will typically download an image that has a "4" in one of its dimensions. One could think of this as a "typical" 24-bit or true-color image with an extra alpha channel. In IDL you have to go to some effort to display such an image correctly:

http://www.dfanning.com/ip_tips/transparentpng.html

Now, for reasons that are obscure and don't have much to do with IDL, I need to create such a PNG image from within a piece of IDL code. Unfortunately, it doesn't look like `WRITE_PNG` is up to the job.

I can easily create a 24-bit true-color image. But this doesn't allow me to use the `TRANSPARENT` keyword. The only way to make a transparent PNG is to have an 8-bit byte image and RGB color vectors.

Am I missing something here in the documentation? Or, if not, does anyone have a favorite method for creating a true-color PNG file with an alpha channel? (I am afraid this is a firm requirement for downstream software to work correctly.)

Cheers,

David

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