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Subject: Displaying Transparent Images

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Fri, 05 Nov 2010 15:44:01 GMT

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Folks,

Jeremy's suggestion the other day about displaying alpha channel images with TVImage was a good one. It has taken me a week or so to get all the bugs worked out (lots of code changes!), but I think I am finally there. I've put up a new version this morning with another bug fix and some code rearrangement to make the code easier to maintain. (Amazing how much things can be improved after you understand what you are doing!)

<http://www.dfanning.com/programs/tvimage.pro>

Testing this functionality gave me a lot of good ideas for how it can be used. In fact, I found I *really* had a need for displaying transparent images yesterday! A transparent image is one in which a particular color has been knocked out so you can see the background behind it.

To make this easy to do, I wrote a new program, named `Make_Transparent_Image`, last night to create transparent images either from other images I have laying around or directly from graphics windows containing plots and such that I wish to display on other, background images. (I was fooling around making image mash-ups for book cover designs.) You can find the program here:

[http://www.dfanning.com/programs/make\\_transparent\\_image.pro](http://www.dfanning.com/programs/make_transparent_image.pro)

I have to admit, it's pretty neat. I'm displaying plots and such with white backgrounds. If I want to create an image with the white background knocked out, so I can put the plot on another image, I just do something like this:

```
IDL> Histoplot, LoadData(7)
IDL> transparent = Make_Transparent_Image(Color='white')
IDL> LoadCT, 22
IDL> TVImage, Loaddata(7)
IDL> TVImage, transparent, POSITION=[0.5, 0.5, 0.95, 0.95]
```

Totally cool! :-)

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.")

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