
Subject: Re: Tiff images with "short" Palette?

Posted by [Bruce Bowler](#) on Wed, 08 Dec 2010 13:35:55 GMT

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On Tue, 07 Dec 2010 14:21:12 -0800, Matt set fingers to keyboard and typed:

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>> Yes, I think a "color vector" is 256 elements in length whether you
>> fill 2 or 100 colors.
>
> This is the crux. Can I make a "color vector" that has a length of 2
> (or 3 or 5)?. If not, is that because of limitations with IDL, or
> because of limitations to the TIFF spec. I've given the spec a glance,
> and I can't see that the palette must be 256 colors.
>
>> Hard to say if it is against the spec, I've never read it. But I don't
>> think you are going to be able to make what you want in IDL. At least I
>> don't know any way to.
>
> Yup, so now I'm looking for alternatives.
>
>> P.S. Hard to fault ArcView for loading the color table vectors. That's
>> what I would do, too. :-(
>
> No, that's exactly right, if your palette has 256 colors, load them all.
> But I really don't want a palette with 256 colors.
```

From a *quick* read of <http://partners.adobe.com/public/developer/en/tiff/TIFF6.pdf>, it would appear that it's more a limitation of IDL, and depending on which section of the spec you read it might be partially a limitation of the spec, which at one point defines the size of the color table as $3 \times 2^{\text{BitsPerSample}}$ (seems to say you can have whatever size table you'd like), but in another section (specifically talking about grey scale images) says that BitsPerSample can either be 4 or 8 and somewhere says that the default for BitsPerSample is 1 (which is neither 4 nor 8 :-)

At this point, I'd point the "flying fickle finger of fault" mostly in the direction of IDL.

Bruce
