

---

Subject: Re: right clicking in an IDL plot with a Mac  
Posted by [Matt Haffner](#) on Fri, 08 Apr 2011 03:25:08 GMT  
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

On Apr 7, 2:21 pm, Barbara <med...@susqu.edu> wrote:

- > I am working on plotting a continuum on a spectrum using norm.pro.
- > The program calls for right clicking to show you are done clicking
- > points on your continuum. However, I am using a Mac and while the
- > normal way to right click with a Mac is to hold down control while you
- > click, that doesn't work on the IDL plot.
- >
- > When I googled this issue, (literally right clicking for a mac in IDL)
- > the only somewhat helpful hint was to use
- > defaults write com.apple.x11 wm\_click\_through -bool true
- >
- > However, their explanation is lost on me... if anyone knows how to fix
- > this issue and can make it blonde-simple (that's right, I'm blaming my
- > hair here) I'd appreciate it!

Some of the details below may depend a bit on the version of IDL and OS X you are using. Hopefully this is general enough--if not let us know some version numbers.

On a Mac, the traditional IDL graphics window is displayed in a separate application called X11 or XQuartz (the name of the newest incarnation). You should see this application pop up on your dock whenever you launch IDL or send your first graphics command. Click on its icon in the dock to bring it to the foreground (the app name in the menubar should change to X11).

Now choose its Preferences... menu item in the standard place under the "X11" application menu. One of the pref tabs should be "Input" and on that pane, there should be an option to "Emulate three button mouse". After you check this, you can use option-click for a middle click and command-click for a right click. Also make sure on the "Windows" tab that the "Click through Inactive Windows" is set. These changes should be saved, so you don't need to do this every time X11 is launched by IDL.

Note that if you have a real 2 or 3 button mouse, you won't normally need to check that first option for a physical right click on the mouse. The mouse should just work. However, you may need to change that "click through" setting for IDL graphics windows to "see" \*any\* of your clicks (left or right). The "defaults write..." command you found is identical to checking this second preference and is something you would paste into a Terminal command line, as Robin mentioned. Old versions of X11 on OS X didn't have this preference in the GUI panel.

If you're going to be using IDL a lot, I strongly recommend installing the latest version of XQuartz ( <http://xquartz.macosforge.org/> ), which continues to fix bugs beyond the version that Apple supplies with the OS. There are separate downloads for 10.5 and 10.6, so make sure you grab the correct one to start. It will inform you of updates through the application after that.

mh

---