
Subject: Re: Constructing Color Tables in IDL
Posted by [davidf](#) on Tue, 18 Feb 1997 08:00:00 GMT
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Jack Saba writes:

- > Thanks for the review. However, those of us who are not used to building
- > color tables should know that generating one that gives the best
- > representation of the data for a particular purpose is trickier than
- > might be expected. See, for example,
- >
- > Rogowitz, Bernice E., and Lloyd A. Treinish
- > "How Not to Lie with Visualization",
- > Computers In Physics 10(3):268, 1996

Jack is absolutely right. People often talk about "seeing their data" when they look at an image. I have been making a bigger and bigger point in the IDL classes that I teach that you are seldom, if ever, really "seeing" your data. You are seeing an *abstraction* of your data, forced--for the most part--into viewing it with something less than 256 colors or shades of gray. And, of course, the colors you select effects what you "see".

I would recommend two additional books by Edward Tufte if people are interested in this topic: *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information* and *Envisioning Information*. These books have really changed the way I write IDL programs.

Cheers,

David

David Fanning, Ph.D.
Fanning Software Consulting
2642 Bradbury Court, Fort Collins, CO 80521
Phone: 970-221-0438 Fax: 970-221-4762
E-Mail: davidf@dfanning.com
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com>
