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Subject: Re: Plot colors

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 20 Jun 2013 12:28:41 GMT

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Mats Löfdahl writes:

- > What are your favorite colors for overplotting several data sets in the
- > same diagram? (I'm assuming Coyote graphics here.) You'd want them to be
- > easy to tell apart and to have a good and similar contrast against the
- > (white) background.
- >
- > For two colors it's easy: red and blue.
- >
- > But already for three colors, if you add green you get something with
- > less contrasty. And for more colors, if you add the complement colors
- > cyan, magenta, and yellow, both yellow and cyan have the same problem.
- > So then I usually inspect the color names in cgcolor and pick darker
- > versions of the too light colors and some redder version of yellow. And
- > if I need more than six I don't really know what to do...
- >
- > So, what is a good strategy? Do you have a good list that you always
- > use, and truncate it to the needed length? Or do you start the list
- > differently depending on how long it has to be? Has anybody written a
- > function for this?

Ah, good question. I pick drawing colors based on the light at a particular time of day (mornings are usually blue, afternoons tend to be shades of red), what flowers are blooming in the rock garden outside my office window, the particular "gestalt" of the graphics display I am creating (an IDL feng shui thing), and my emotional state. (You don't want to see the colors I pick when I am doing something with function graphics!)

Every plot seems to be different. I use cgPickColorName to help me decide. :-)

Cheers,

David

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Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.idlcoyote.com/>

Sepore ma de ni thue. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

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