
Subject: 2 cent tip: Faster way to plot millions of points
Posted by [Liam Gumley](#) on Fri, 11 Jul 1997 07:00:00 GMT
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Sometimes we need to plot spectra which contain millions of points. It appears to be faster to use PLOTS (rather than PLOT).

Try the following:

```
n = 1000000L
x = lindgen(n)
y = sin(2.0*!pi*findgen(n)/(n-1))
t0 = systime(1.0) & plot,x,y & print,systime(1.0)-t0
t0 = systime(1.0) & plot,x,y,/nodata & plots,x,y & print,systime(1.0)-t0
```

On my SGI Power Indigo running IDL 5.0, it takes 21.43 sec for the first plot, and 12.46 sec for the second plot. I observe similar speedups on Linux (IDL 5.0) and Windows NT 3.51 (IDL 4.0.1).

Cheers,
Liam.
