
Subject: Re: Postscript font usage

Posted by [Todd Clements](#) on Thu, 12 Apr 2001 17:59:32 GMT

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> I have a somewhat open-ended question. I'm wondering: how many of you
> use Postscript fonts in your direct graphics work? What are your
> experiences with it?

Yes, I use them exclusively for printing purposes, and my experience with them is yuck.

However, things aren't all that bad. We only have about 5 different "major" plot types in the lab that we use. Of course, each of these plots can have different annotations and labels, and titles and such, but five isn't too large of a number.

After hours of tinkering, I managed to put together programs that use IDLs silly built in fonts on screen and postscript fonts in the output, and for the most part things show up where they are supposed to, but it took tinkering. Putting in magic numbers for relative sizes, thicknesses, offsets and all those kinds of things.

I think postscript fonts could be made to be easier to use, but I have to say I understand some of the limitations that RSI/Kodak is working under having to support fonts on multiple platforms while still allowing code to be platform-'independent'. If I had to do the same thing, at some point I'd probably throw up my hands and just create my own fonts as well.

> legibility. In so many talks, the speaker rambles on about a plot for
> five minutes in front of a bemused squinting audience, until someone
> finally gets the courage to ask, "excuse me, what are the axes?"
> That tends not to happen with postscript fonts.

Postscript fonts have nothing to do with this one! Don't get me started on people who don't care enough about their data to make it look good! Sometimes post-processing is needed to make plots look good, and people should do that, darnit!

Todd

Subject: Re: Postscript font usage

Posted by [bcohen](#) on Fri, 13 Apr 2001 13:19:31 GMT

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I use PS fonts exclusively too, because of the nice aesthetics. It is a big pain to find some of the special symbols but it's

worth it (btw how DO you get the sun symbol?). As for crossing platforms, how's this: I can switch into math mode to get a character like del or the plus/minus on my Mac G3 laptop, but NOT on my iMac. Nobody (including multiple tries with RSI) has been able to help me on this one.

Barbara

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Subject: Re: Postscript font usage

Posted by [Liam E. Gumley](#) on Fri, 13 Apr 2001 14:05:30 GMT

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Barbara A Cohen wrote:

- > I use PS fonts exclusively too, because of the nice aesthetics.
- > It is a big pain to find some of the special symbols but it's
- > worth it (btw how DO you get the sun symbol?). As for crossing
- > platforms, how's this: I can switch into math mode to get a
- > character like del or the plus/minus on my Mac G3 laptop, but
- > NOT on my iMac. Nobody (including multiple tries with RSI)
- > has been able to help me on this one.

I highly recommend TeXtoIDL for formatting Greek and math symbols in PostScript and vector fonts:

<http://physweb.mnstate.edu/mcraig/TeXtoIDL/>

Cheers,
Liam.

Subject: Re: Postscript font usage

Posted by [Paul van Delst](#) on Fri, 13 Apr 2001 14:42:54 GMT

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Barbara A Cohen wrote:

- >
- > I use PS fonts exclusively too, because of the nice aesthetics.
- > It is a big pain to find some of the special symbols but it's
- > worth it (btw how DO you get the sun symbol?)

Wow - I wanted that symbol in a plot recently (got sick of having to use "solar" as a subscript for everything). Does it exist in a form IDLers can use? I couldn't find it.

paulv

--

Paul van Delst A little learning is a dangerous thing;
CIMSS @ NOAA/NCEP Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring;
Ph: (301)763-8000 x7274 There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
Fax:(301)763-8545 And drinking largely sobers us again.
paul.vandelst@noaa.gov Alexander Pope.

Subject: Re: Postscript font usage
Posted by [Wayne Landsman](#) on Fri, 13 Apr 2001 16:52:14 GMT
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Paul van Delst wrote:

> Barbara A Cohen wrote:
>>
>> I use PS fonts exclusively too, because of the nice aesthetics.
>> It is a big pain to find some of the special symbols but it's
>> worth it (btw how DO you get the sun symbol?)
>
> Wow - I wanted that symbol in a plot recently (got sick of having to use "solar" as a
> subscript for everything). Does it exist in a form IDLers can use? I couldn't find it.
>

The procedure sunsymbol.pro in <http://idlastro.gsfc.nasa.gov/ftp/pro/plot/sunsymbol.pro> creates a postscript subscript Sun symbol. (Try saying "postscript subscript Sun symbol " 10 times fast ;-)) However, it is something of a kluge (it draws a circle and then a dot) and the quality may depend on your particular character thickness and size settings.

--Wayne Landsman
landsman@mpb.gsfc.nasa.gov

P.S. To answer an earlier question, the procedure ploterror.pro in the same directory can be used to plot X error bars only, by setting the Y errors to zero, e.g.

iDL> ploterror, x, y, xerr, y*0
