
Subject: PRINTER device changed in IDL 6
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Sat, 28 Feb 2004 16:52:20 GMT
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Folks,

I have been getting odd e-mail from folks complaining about programs that have been working for years. I've traced it back to an unannounced change in the PRINTER device in IDL 6.0. I'm trying now to see how widespread this phenomenon is before I report the problem to RSI.

Here is the test program:

```
PRO Test
  thisDevice = !D.Name
  Set_Plot, 'PRINTER'
  TVLCT, 255, 255, 0, 200
  Set_Plot, thisDevice
END
```

This code runs fine in all versions of IDL prior to 6.0. But it fails in 6.0 (on both my Windows machines, at least) with the following error:

```
% TVLCT: Error creating device colortable.
```

Oddly, this program does not cause an error the FIRST time it is run in a new IDL session, only on subsequent times!! Very strange.

Anyway, it is the kind of thing that drives programmers nuts, because it means if your programs are going to work transparently across devices, you now have to protect all TVLCT calls to be sure you are not in the PRINTER device. This is *surely* not what RSI has in mind. :-)

(Even if IDL isn't going to allow you to change PRINTER colors once you copy them into the device from somewhere else, a limitation I have hated but worked around for several years, not allowing you to use a TVLCT command while in the PRINTER device is going to make it next to impossible to write general programs that can be sent to both the printer and to the display device.)

Does anyone see this on non-Windows machines? Thanks.

Cheers,

David

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