
Subject: Re: strange things in CONTOUR
Posted by [btt](#) on Mon, 14 Feb 2005 16:35:10 GMT
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David Fanning wrote:

> Ben Tupper writes:
>
>
>> The second thing is interesting because David says it works fine for him
>> (presumably without specifying levels.) I believe that that is one of his
>> rewards for being one with IDL - IDL simply intuit his desires.
>
>
> Uh, yeah, I've noticed this, especially with iTools. :-)
>
> Cheers,
>
> David
>
> P.S. Let's just say I've heard St. John's Wort is good for
> those black thoughts.
>
Speaking of which,

I signed up for the iTools tutorial, but, alas, find I have no time (yet.) Have you been following it? If so, what do you think?

Cheers,
Ben

Subject: Re: strange things in CONTOUR
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 14 Feb 2005 17:08:27 GMT
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Ben Tupper writes:

> I signed up for the iTools tutorial, but, alas, find I have no time (yet.) Have
> you been following it?

I've been doing my tutorials religiously. There is a T-shirt at stake, after all.

> If so, what do you think?

Well, I find I can do all kinds of things with a line plot that I had never imagined I would want to do. I spent

three hours one day moving all the axes around, seeking a more aesthetic arrangement, something that would speak to the artist in me as well as the scientist. Finally, I settled on the original box axes as the arrangement I liked best (although that Picasso-like arrangement was nice), but how would I have ever known without the opportunity to try other arrangements?

I'm trying to be humorous (although God knows, with a too much of a sarcastic wit).

To be serious for a moment, I **greatly** appreciate these tutorials. The more I learn about iTools, the more I appreciate them. A LOT of work and effort has gone into them. Even an idiot like me can see that!

But, personally, I find them WAY too complex. I find I'm not interested in 60-70 percent of what the tool allows me to do. And when I **am** interested in a tool, I'd like it to do something just a little bit different. I can't make heads or tails of how to program the darn things to get them to work my way, so they frustrate me. When I get frustrated, I get sarcastic. Ask my wife. :-)

Anyway, I keep plugging away at the tutorials and enjoying them immensely. I keep telling myself that sooner or later I am going to see why a scientist will want to use these rather than the good ol' direct graphics. :-)

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.
Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>

Subject: Re: strange things in CONTOUR
Posted by [Benjamin Hornberger](#) on Mon, 14 Feb 2005 17:34:10 GMT
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David Fanning wrote:

- > I keep telling myself that sooner or later
- > I am going to see why a scientist will want to use these
- > rather than the good ol' direct graphics. :-)

>

After having discovered no more than five percent of their features, I find the iTools really useful for creating a quick plot where I can add annotations, change axis ranges, arrange multiple images on a page etc. easily. Also, very importantly, I can print with a mouseclick (and adjust the size on the paper interactively) rather than using ten direct graphics commands to create a plot on the screen, starting over again ten times till all parameters are correct, then switching to the PS device, repeating my 10 commands, checking the file in Ghostview and finally printing from there. Also, you can save your data along with the plot in an .isv file, which I find useful.

By the way 1-- I have received only one tutorial so far, and that's been three weeks ago. Did they forget about me?

By the way 2 -- I managed to get started on iTools with the iTools User's Guide, even though it's not very clear at the beginning what Windows, Views, Visualizations, Data Spaces etc. are and how they are connected. The tutorial(s) definitely help to get started.

Cheers,
Benjamin

Subject: Re: strange things in CONTOUR
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 14 Feb 2005 17:54:18 GMT
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Benjamin Hornberger writes:

> After having discovered no more than five percent of their features, I
> find the iTools really useful for creating a quick plot where I can add
> annotations, change axis ranges, arrange multiple images on a page etc.
> easily. Also, very importantly, I can print with a mouseclick (and
> adjust the size on the paper interactively) rather than using ten direct
> graphics commands to create a plot on the screen, starting over again
> ten times till all parameters are correct, then switching to the PS
> device, repeating my 10 commands, checking the file in Ghostview and
> finally printing from there. Also, you can save your data along with the
> plot in an .isv file, which I find useful.

Well, see, there you go! I have to admit iTools are *almost* worth switching to just for Printing alone. I find it extraordinarily difficult to write a program that can be (1) displayed in a window, (2) sent directly to a PostScript file, and (3) sent directly to a printer.

The first two requirements are a piece of cake. I've gotten so good at that that even my draw widgets know how to do it. I don't have to do anything special to get that kind of functionality.

But printing is a pain in the ass, primarily because you have to have all your colors loaded *before* you SET_PLOT to the 8-bit PRINTER device, and who writes programs like that these days!? I feel like I am taking a step back into the 1970's every time I do it.

And, of course, object graphics fonts are beautiful. I wish (hint, hint) they would make them available to the rest of us.

Perhaps you're right. Those of us in the Dinosaur Club better get with it. :-)

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

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Subject: Re: strange things in CONTOUR

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 14 Feb 2005 17:55:58 GMT

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Benjamin Hornberger writes:

> By the way 1-- I have received only one tutorial so far, and that's been
> three weeks ago. Did they forget about me?

Check your SPAM filter. That's where I found my notice. And tutorial 2 is a bit odd. There is a SAVE file that comes with it, but as far as I can see, it has nothing to do with the tutorial. I had to make up my own data (not hard in direct graphics).

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

Subject: Re: strange things in CONTOUR
Posted by [Benjamin Hornberger](#) on Mon, 14 Feb 2005 18:52:04 GMT
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David Fanning wrote:

- > Benjamin Hornberger writes:
- > And tutorial 2 is a bit odd. There is a SAVE file that
- > comes with it, but as far as I can see, it has nothing
- > to do with the tutorial.

Well, it turns out you should use the variables VX and VY from the dataset, then you get what is shown in the PDF file. The other variables in the data .sav file seem to be unnecessary, as well as the macro .sav file they offer. It's not mentioned anywhere. Quality control seems to be on vacation.

Benjamin

Subject: Re: strange things in CONTOUR
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 14 Feb 2005 19:20:44 GMT
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Benjamin Hornberger writes:

- > Well, it turns out you should use the variables VX and VY from the
- > dataset, then you get what is shown in the PDF file. The other variables
- > in the data .sav file seem to be unnecessary, as well as the macro .sav
- > file they offer. It's not mentioned anywhere. Quality control seems to
- > be on vacation.

I thought it was part of their strategy to separate the wheat from the chaff. They didn't print a whole lot of T-shirts! :-)

Cheers,

David

--

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