
Subject: Re: staying away from color indices 0, and 255?
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 01 Feb 2006 19:46:48 GMT
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savoie@nsidc.org writes:

- > I understand that the 0th index gets changed often. But why is it a good
- > reason to stay away from index 255?
- >
- > I ask, because I've always reserved the top 16 colors for myself and done
- > scaling and loadct, etc, into the remaining locations, and before I rewrite
- > that code, I thought I'd see how dire it's going to be.
- >
- > So can anyone enlighten me on this?

I don't know. I've been working with IDL for so long,
and I've developed so many "rules of thumb" I can't
even remember what they are all about anymore. :-(

I'm guessing that if you don't follow this one you
will probably, sooner or later, end up drawing white
on white in PostScript. It's beautiful, very chic,
but not good for that Nature article you had been
planning. :-)

Cheers,

David

--

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

Subject: Re: staying away from color indices 0, and 255?
Posted by [Michael Wallace](#) on Wed, 01 Feb 2006 20:12:29 GMT
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- > I don't know. I've been working with IDL for so long,
- > and I've developed so many "rules of thumb" I can't
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- > I'm guessing that if you don't follow this one you
- > will probably, sooner or later, end up drawing white
- > on white in PostScript. It's beautiful, very chic,
- > but not good for that Nature article you had been
- > planning. :-)

I don't know about everyone else, but when I define my own color table I always make color index 0 black and index 255 white. Colors 1 - 254 are the ones that get changed. No matter how you change the other colors, black and white are always the same -- you wouldn't believe how helpful that has been... or maybe you would?

Mike

Subject: Re: staying away from color indices 0, and 255?
Posted by [Paul Van Delst\[1\]](#) on Wed, 01 Feb 2006 20:18:30 GMT
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savoie@nsidc.org wrote:

>
> Hey all,
>
> I'm generating some images for publication, and I've *always* been able to
> escape postscript, until now. So I found lots of information about how to do
> device independent graphics, but as I was reading the notes on David's site
> (in the TOMS tutorial
> http://www.dfanning.com/graphics_tips/toms_tutorial.html) and found this:
>
>
> "Note I have added 1 to the result, so that the TOMS data is now scaled from
> 1 to 7, instead of from 0 to 6. I have learned from hard experience that if
> you are working with colors in a PostScript file, you want to stay well away
> from color indices 0 and 255. Use any other color indices, but not either one
> of those! (This is not bad advice, in general, as it turns out.)"
>
> I understand that the 0th index gets changed often. But why is it a good
> reason to stay away from index 255?
>
> I ask, because I've always reserved the top 16 colors for myself and done
> scaling and loadct, etc, into the remaining locations, and before I rewrite
> that code, I thought I'd see how dire it's going to be.
>
> So can anyone enlighten me on this?

It buggerises up the defaults for !P.COLOR and !P.BACKGROUND for onscreen work. For PS output the effects are a bit more esoteric, but I assume similar behaviour for my work.

Try doing

```
IDL> tvlct,r,g,b,/get
IDL> plot,indgen(10)
```

```
IDL> idx=0
IDL> r[idx]=50 & g[idx]=100 & b[idx]=150
IDL> tvlct,r,g,b
IDL> plot,indgen(10)
```

```
IDL> idx=255
IDL> r[idx]=150 & g[idx]=100 & b[idx]=50
IDL> tvlct,r,g,b
IDL> plot,indgen(10)
```

to get an idea of what can happen on screen. Test on PS output (when you've figured it out, let us know.... I can never remember how it works).

paulv

--

Paul van Delst
CIMSS @ NOAA/NCEP/EMC
