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Subject: Re: Sun symbol (again!)

Posted by [Craig Markwardt](#) on Mon, 22 Dec 2008 02:16:40 GMT

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On Dec 21, 6:32 pm, Michael Williams <mjwilli...@gmail.com> wrote:

> Has anyone made any progress with getting a circular, typographically  
> correct sun symbol using IDL? This is the last post on the issue, and  
> I agree with its authors that the solutions from 2004 and 1997 are not  
> satisfactory.

I don't get it. Is there any reason that '!Mn!X' doesn't work?  
TEXTOIDL() is capable of making this character with '\odot', in  
contradiction to what the poster says below (I have a version of  
TEXTOIDL from 1996).

Craig

> On 11 Apr, 04:49, "jsch...@gmail.com" <jsch...@gmail.com> wrote:

>

>> I'd like to make a plot with a nice sun symbol.

>

>> It's been a few years since we had this discussion, and I was hoping  
>> perhaps someone has some new insight.

>

>> I've read the newsgroup discussions from '04 and '97 and wasn't  
>> particularly thrilled with any of the solutions.

>

>> Here are the things that won't / don't work for me.

>

>> 1) TeXtoIDL doesn't know \odot.

>

>> 2) sunsymbol.pro gives something unsatisfactory

>

>> <http://web.mit.edu/jschwab/Public/sunsym.png>

>

>> 3) The solution that initially seemed most inline with what I want was  
>> modifying my ttfont.map and using the marvosym font. I don't find this  
>> satisfactory because it's not a permanent solution since I don't want  
>> to modify my ttfont.map each time and because I don't even approve of  
>> the way it looks. (It's not symmetric!)

>

>> <http://web.mit.edu/jschwab/Public/marvosym.png>

>

>> What I'm left with is manually positioning the vector font symbol '!9!  
>> Z(6E)!X'. It will work and gives me something that's not bad looking.  
>> Unsurprisingly though, I find it rather unsatisfying.

>

>> If anyone has a better / more flexible solution, I'd love to hear it.  
>  
>

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Subject: Re: Sun symbol (again!)  
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 22 Dec 2008 03:57:07 GMT  
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Craig Markwardt writes:

> I don't get it. Is there any reason that '!Mn!X' doesn't work?  
> TEXTOIDL() is capable of making this character with '\odot', in  
> contradiction to what the poster says below (I have a version of  
> TEXTOIDL from 1996).

I think it works if you don't mind Hershey fonts in your PostScript output. But maybe you need something more elegant for formal presentations.

Here is an article that describes one possibility using freely available (and free) true-type fonts:

[http://www.dfanning.com/misc\\_tips/sun\\_symbol.html](http://www.dfanning.com/misc_tips/sun_symbol.html)

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.  
Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.  
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>  
Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

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Subject: Re: Sun symbol (again!)  
Posted by [anand](#) on Mon, 22 Dec 2008 05:28:49 GMT  
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the Sun symbol can be put in plots or postscript files using the program sunsymbol.pro which you can find at <http://idlastro.gsfc.nasa.gov/ftp/pro/plot/sunsymbol.pro>

you can use it as:

```
ytitle='height (R'+sunsymbol()+)'
```

to express the y-axis title in terms of solar radius.

Anand.

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Subject: Re: Sun symbol (again!)

Posted by [Craig Markwardt](#) on Mon, 22 Dec 2008 08:06:22 GMT

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On Dec 21, 10:57 pm, David Fanning <n...@dfanning.com> wrote:

> Craig Markwardt writes:

>> I don't get it. Is there any reason that '!Mn!X' doesn't work?

>> TEXTOIDL() is capable of making this character with '\odot', in

>> contradiction to what the poster says below (I have a version of

>> TEXTOIDL from 1996).

>

> I think it works if you don't mind Hershey fonts in

> your PostScript output. But maybe you need something

> more elegant for formal presentations.

>

OK, I get it. It's rather funny that the Postscript symbol font doesn't even contain the pure circle glyph. At least then you could have cobble together a sun symbol with a circle and a dot. I still don't think that the Hershey fonts are a horrible choice.

Craig

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Subject: Re: Sun symbol (again!)

Posted by [Michael Williams](#) on Wed, 24 Dec 2008 00:32:02 GMT

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On 22 Dec, 02:16, Craig Markwardt <cbmarkwa...@gmail.com> wrote:

> On Dec 21, 6:32 pm, Michael Williams <mjwilli...@gmail.com> wrote:

>

>> Has anyone made any progress with getting a circular, typographically

>> correct sun symbol using IDL? This is the last post on the issue, and

>> I agree with its authors that the solutions from 2004 and 1997 are not

>> satisfactory.

>

> I don't get it. Is there any reason that '!Mn!X' doesn't work?

> TEXTOIDL() is capable of making this character with '\odot', in

> contradiction to what the poster says below (I have a version of

> TEXTOIDL from 1996).

Hi Craig,

those two solutions only work with Hershey fonts, which I would prefer

to avoid for aesthetic reasons.

-- Mike

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Subject: Re: Sun symbol (again!)

Posted by [Michael Williams](#) on Wed, 24 Dec 2008 00:34:59 GMT

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On 22 Dec, 05:28, anand <jana...@gmail.com> wrote:

- > the Sun symbol can be put in plots or postscript files using the
- > program sunsymbol.pro which you can find
- at <http://idlastro.gsfc.nasa.gov/ftp/pro/plot/sunsymbol.pro>
- >
- > you can use it as:
- > `ytitle='height (R'+sunsymbol()+)'`
- > to express the y-axis title in terms of solar radius.

Thanks. The result (which I understand is a combination of a letter "o" and a dot) is not great. When Times is used (which is my preference) it looks nothing like a sun symbol, which is not surprising given how it is assembled. Helvetica is better but still far from symmetrical, as can be seen on David Fanning's page.

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Subject: Re: Sun symbol (again!)

Posted by [Michael Williams](#) on Wed, 24 Dec 2008 00:41:07 GMT

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On 22 Dec, 03:57, David Fanning <n...@dfanning.com> wrote:

- > Craig Markwardt writes:
- >> I don't get it. Is there any reason that '!Mn!X' doesn't work?
- >> TEXTOIDL() is capable of making this character with '\odot', in
- >> contradiction to what the poster says below (I have a version of
- >> TEXTOIDL from 1996).
- >
- > I think it works if you don't mind Hershey fonts in
- > your PostScript output. But maybe you need something
- > more elegant for formal presentations.

I don't mind Hershey fonts for this one character! Is there any way to mix them up with real Postscript fonts in the same output? This would be ideal! I want my sun symbol to be a perfect circle, which Hershey fonts do admirably, but I don't want the bowls of my "o" and "a" and "e" to be perfect circles since, well, it's not the 1960s any more, and computers are capable of better typography! : )

I would prefer to avoid TrueType since the output is visibly blotchy within individual letters for unknown reasons (you can see this on your example: [http://www.dfanning.com/misc\\_tips/sun\\_symbol\\_6.png](http://www.dfanning.com/misc_tips/sun_symbol_6.png))

- > Here is an article that describes one possibility using
- > freely available (and free) true-type fonts:
- >
- > [http://www.dfanning.com/misc\\_tips/sun\\_symbol.html](http://www.dfanning.com/misc_tips/sun_symbol.html)

Thanks very much for writing that up! Very useful information. I'm afraid none of those really suit my purposes, since I require publication quality typography. For the time being I will open the files in Adobe Illustrator and manually edit the Postscript fonts.

At the risk of wandering off-topic, as someone new to IDL, its typographic capabilities seem to me to be extremely eccentric, crufty and archaic compared to other graphing toolkits.

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Subject: Re: Sun symbol (again!)

Posted by [Michael Williams](#) on Wed, 24 Dec 2008 00:56:06 GMT

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On 22 Dec, 03:57, David Fanning <n...@dfanning.com> wrote:

- > Here is an article that describes one possibility using
- > freely available (and free) true-type fonts:
- >
- > [http://www.dfanning.com/misc\\_tips/sun\\_symbol.html](http://www.dfanning.com/misc_tips/sun_symbol.html)

For the benefit of future Googlers, the sun symbol in marvosym, while better than many other solutions, is not a circle but a backwards "o" (note the thickness and angle of the stroke on the right and left-hand sides). An astronomical sun symbol is a perfect circle with a point at its centre: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sun\\_symbol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sun_symbol). Users of OS X have access to (and licenses for!) a number of TrueType fonts which contain this symbol and presumably following your procedure to get a True Type symbol with these fonts would also work. These fonts include Apple Symbols and Arial Unicode MS. Presumably the same is true on Windows and Linux.

-- Mike