
Subject: Re: PostScript Background Color Preference
Posted by [Paul Van Delst\[1\]](#) on Wed, 17 Nov 2010 16:18:21 GMT
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David Fanning wrote:

> Folks,
>
> I tout in my new graphics commands (FSC_Plot, FSC_Contour, etc.)
> that they "look the same on your display and in a PostScript file".
> But, of course, that's only true if you always use, as I tend
> to, white backgrounds for your graphical output. The joke, of
> course, is that you can have any background color you like
> in PostScript, as long as it's white.
>
> This is not true, you *can* have different colored
> backgrounds in PostScript, but you do have to go to
> some trouble to get them.
>
> Here is my question. I can produce different background colors in
> PostScript in my new graphics commands, but is this what people
> want and expect? My reasoning is that if I use a command and I write
> BACKGROUND='rose', and I want a command that "works everywhere",
> then I should expect a rose colored background everywhere.
>
> But, I can't quite pull the trigger on this. For some reason,
> it's doesn't feel like *exactly* what I want, even with all
> the big talk. What do you think? What would you want?

If I set the background colour explicitly, I expect it to always use that background colour, as with your "rose" example. So if I do BACKGROUND='black', I expect my printer to go through a lot of toner. Nothing enrages me more than technology that asks what I want (in this case via a keyword), and then ignores what I tell it. Grrrr.... :o)

For default, I'm happy with either a white (ala NG graphics) or black (ala DG graphics) background onscreen - which I interpret as effectively "transparent" so that printouts will be as one expects. I would recommend you adopt a white background so you're seen as being aligned with the bright and sunny future direction of graphics in IDL (i.e. NG)

:oD

cheers,

paulv

Subject: Re: PostScript Background Color Preference
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 17 Nov 2010 16:30:36 GMT
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Paul van Delst writes:

> For default, I'm happy with either a white (ala NG graphics) or black (ala DG graphics) background onscreen - which I
> interpret as effectively "transparent" so that printouts will be as one expects. I would recommend you adopt a white
> background so you're seen as being aligned with the bright and sunny future direction of graphics in IDL (i.e. NG)

I *have* adopted a white background. But just as you assume black is "transparent" because of long exposure to the quirks of IDL, I assume background is "white" when I make a PostScript file.

My new routines are giving us a new opportunity to interpret the world the way it "ought to be", rather than the way it "always has been". :-)

Cheers,

David

P.S. While admiring your "black is transparent" approach, I can't help wondering what trick of perception you use to get colors that work correctly on both black and white backgrounds. :-)

--

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.")

Subject: Re: PostScript Background Color Preference
Posted by [Paul Van Delst\[1\]](#) on Wed, 17 Nov 2010 16:42:42 GMT
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David Fanning wrote:

> Paul van Delst writes:
>

>> For default, I'm happy with either a white (ala NG graphics) or black (ala DG graphics) background onscreen - which I

>> interpret as effectively "transparent" so that printouts will be as one expects. I would recommend you adopt a white background so you're seen as being aligned with the bright and sunny future direction of graphics in IDL (i.e. NG)

>

> I *have* adopted a white background. But just

> as you assume black is "transparent" because of

> long exposure to the quirks of IDL, I assume

> background is "white" when I make a PostScript

> file.

By default, yes. That is, if the user doesn't specify *any* background colour.

> My new routines are giving us a new opportunity

> to interpret the world the way it "ought to be",

> rather than the way it "always has been". :-)

I reckon just go with white background everywhere by default. People should be used to seeing white background graphics onscreen nowadays.

Simple for you to code and simple for neophytes to grok what will happen when they print. The older IDL codgers will have to make their own way.... :o)

>

> Cheers,

>

> David

>

> P.S. While admiring your "black is transparent"

> approach, I can't help wondering what trick of

> perception you use to get colors that work correctly

> on both black and white backgrounds. :-)

Very low tech, non-scalable solution. In my DG code, I do stuff like:

yellow_color = KEYWORD_SET(ps) ? cyan : yellow

so onscreen I have yellow lines on black background. For PS output, the "yellow" becomes blue on white background.

With NG I just don't worry about it any more (i.e. I never use yellow to plot :o)

cheers,

paulv

Subject: Re: PostScript Background Color Preference
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 17 Nov 2010 16:56:39 GMT
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Paul van Delst writes:

> I reckon just go with white background everywhere by default. People
should be used to seeing white background graphics
> onscreen nowadays.

Yes, you might want to have a look at my new code.
You might be surprised by what you find there. :-)

> Simple for you to code and simple for neophytes to grok what
> will happen when they print.

Well, that's the problem. Writing device independent code
is NOT simple to program! Hence an entire book devoted to
how to do it. In fact, if I weren't writing this book,
I would have had no *idea* how hard this really is. :-)

You probably wouldn't believe how much book chapters have
changed since I made them available, once I took my own
advice and tried to write one of these "easy" programs!

> With NG I just don't worry about it any more
> (i.e. I never use yellow to plot :o)

Yes, I'm trying to bring the same "don't worry about it
anymore" approach to the rest of us, who either can't
upgrade to IDL 8, or who, like me, can't get the damn
thing to run for 10 minutes at a time and have given
up on it. :-)

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.
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Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

Subject: Re: PostScript Background Color Preference
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 18 Nov 2010 17:02:24 GMT

Paul van Delst writes:

> Simple for you to code...

I'll just say this, making PostScript background colors other than white is a HELL of lot harder to program than I ever imagined!!

Getting a background color and then allowing !P.MULTI plots is a big, big chore. :-(

Anyway, here are new routines that appear to do this correctly.

<http://www.dfanning.com/programs/tvimage.pro>
<http://www.dfanning.com/programs/tvscale.pro>
http://www.dfanning.com/programs/fsc_contour.pro
http://www.dfanning.com/programs/fsc_surf.pro
http://www.dfanning.com/programs/fsc_plot.pro

Cheers,

David

P.S. Let's just say the first person who mentions the word "hack" will be dealing with Coyote and his gang.

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

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