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Subject: Earth Symbol

Posted by [Tim Bovaird](#) on Sun, 13 Mar 2011 17:26:11 GMT

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Has anyone came up with a method to print the earth symbol (`\oplus` in latex)? Same question has been asked for the sun symbol and answered with the `sunsymbol` function, however I haven't been able to find a solution anywhere for the earth symbol. Any help would be appreciated.

Thanks, Tim

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Subject: Re: Earth Symbol

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 14 Mar 2011 18:58:43 GMT

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Paulo Penteado writes:

> Was this ever mentioned anywhere? I had never heard of `tex2idl()`. It  
> does not seem to be present in the help.

The publicist was promoted from the IT department, where he previously designed inaccessible web pages. :-)

Cheers,

David

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David Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.

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

Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

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Subject: Re: Earth Symbol

Posted by [wlandsman](#) on Mon, 14 Mar 2011 19:13:41 GMT

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On Monday, March 14, 2011 2:47:24 PM UTC-4, Paulo Penteado wrote:

> Was this ever mentioned anywhere? I had never heard of `tex2idl()`. It  
> does not seem to be present in the help.

Well the ability to use LaTeX symbols in `PLOT()` was one of the new features advertised in IDL 8.0, and `tex2idl()` is the function called internally by `PLOT()` to accomplish this. For example, the

online help for the TITLE keyword to PLOT() describes how to use Latex notation in IDL plots.

Unfortunately, while tex2idl() has the Earth symbol \oplus, it does not have the Sun symbol \odot, which remains a perpetual problem (for publishable fonts) in IDL. (The unicode font mentioned by Chris Torrence does not appear to be on either my Linux or Mac machines.) --Wayne

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Subject: Re: Earth Symbol

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 14 Mar 2011 19:31:37 GMT

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wlandsman writes:

> Unfortunately, while tex2idl() has the Earth symbol \oplus, it does not have the Sun symbol \odot, which remains a perpetual problem (for publishable fonts) in IDL. (The unicode font mentioned by Chris Torrence does not appear to be on either my Linux or Mac machines.)

The version of tex2IDL() I am looking at has the Sun symbol, but as a Unicode value. The real problem is that IDL does not come with an installed Unicode font that can be used. You have to go looking for one. Then you have to install it in the IDL distribution, modify the ttfont.map file to locate it, etc., etc.

It is \*slightly\* easier in Windows, because you can use the fonts that are installed in the normal Windows/fonts directory just by naming them. But, even then, it is difficult to get the thing working everywhere. (I just tried adding the Sun and Earth symbol the the Greek program I have.)

The problem there is that you have to "install" the true-type Unicode font you want to use:

```
Device, Set_Font='Arial Unicode MS', /TT_Font
```

But this doesn't "transfer" to the PostScript device. So, even if you get it working on your computer, there is no guarantee it is going to work in PostScript. You have to Set\_Plot to PostScript, then issue the \*same\* Device command as above, and THEN it works everywhere.

It just seems too darn complicated to be useful.

Cheers,

David

--

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

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Subject: Re: Earth Symbol  
Posted by [Michael Galloy](#) on Mon, 14 Mar 2011 19:33:57 GMT  
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On 3/14/11 12:47 PM, Paulo Penteado wrote:  
> On Mar 14, 1:31 pm, Michael Galloy<[mgal...@gmail.com](mailto:mgal...@gmail.com)> wrote:  
>> Well, you can use the new LaTeX commands with direct graphics if you use  
>> the new TEX2IDL routine distributed with IDL 8.0:  
>>  
>> IDL> xyouts, 0.5, 0.5, charsize=5., /normal, tex2idl('\$\oplus\$'), font=1  
>  
> Was this ever mentioned anywhere? I had never heard of tex2idl(). It  
> does not seem to be present in the help.

It's there in the lib/graphics directory, but since it's not documented,  
I supposed it could go away in any future release. It was update to my  
review of the new graphics system (not sure when I had added that):

<http://michaelgalloy.com/2010/08/12/idl-8-0-a-new-graphics-interface.html>

Mike

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[www.michaelgalloy.com](http://www.michaelgalloy.com)  
Research Mathematician  
Tech-X Corporation

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Subject: Re: Earth Symbol  
Posted by [wlandsman](#) on Tue, 15 Mar 2011 14:21:32 GMT  
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On Monday, March 14, 2011 3:31:37 PM UTC-4, David Fanning wrote:  
> The  
> real problem is that IDL does not come with  
> an installed Unicode font that can be used.  
> You have to go looking for one.

I agree with this. I remember when IDL 8.0 first came out, I went through a series of good news -- bad news discoveries.

Good News: IDL 8.0 allows one to use a TeX-like syntax for mathematical symbols

Bad News: The Sun symbol is not listed among the available symbols in the PLOT() help

Good News: The Sun symbol *\*is\** listed in the tex2idl code used by PLOT()

Bad News: The tex2idl Sun symbol requires a Unicode font and I can't figure out how to use a Unicode font with IDL on my Mac/Linux machines.

So I agree that having an installed Unicode font for IDL would be an important addition for a scientific plotting language. --Wayne

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