
Subject: MP4/Animated GIF/JPEG woes....(Windows, IDL 8.1)

Posted by [Daft Pict](#) on Mon, 11 Jul 2011 15:59:00 GMT

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I've just started collaborating with some planetary astronomers who tend to use very different tools compared to us traditional observational astronomers :-). It's fun but I'm trying to generate products that they use (and I typically don't) and having some teeth-gnashing moments and screaming at the IDL help pages....

1). Creating an MP4 file from a stream of images - seems easy according to the help pages and I duplicated the example code. The resulting file is playable on my windows box using media player, but not when using QuickTime on either windows or their Mac systems.

2) Animated GIFs again seem straightforward, except that `write_gif` appears to reset my color table so I lose the color in overlays over images. I pass in the current RGB values from the common block after setting my tables but the gif file is B&W and the RGB arrays are all reset!

3) Even tried animated JPEG since the help pages describes how to do it, but the sample code doesn't work as I get an error when trying to use the unit option even though it is described in the help....

Venting over - if anyone has some suggestions as to what causes any of these problems or have solved these issues, are please let me know
cheers - Brian

Subject: Re: MP4/Animated GIF/JPEG woes....(Windows, IDL 8.1)

Posted by [Daft Pict](#) on Wed, 13 Jul 2011 00:46:18 GMT

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Yes - that was the problem. Like you I got solid green in QT but 5fps makes it work. THANKS!

However, being realistic I really need to have a slower frame rate.

I'm displaying a sequence of observations taken from a NASA probe and I typically only have ~20 frames taken over a couple hours. To get the best visualization of the changes we see I was writing the mp4 at 1 fps otherwise it's over in 3-4 seconds and hard to see! What are the odds of a fix for the QT issue?

The alternative approach I tried was an animated gif since my mac colleagues are ok with that. My problem was that `write_gif` resets the color table (see original post) and I lose all my color annotation/overlays highlighting the features. Suggestions to get that working would be just as good :-)

Thanks again! Glad that folks are trying to help.
cheers - Brian

Subject: Re: MP4/Animated GIF/JPEG woes....(Windows, IDL 8.1)

Posted by [penteado](#) on Wed, 13 Jul 2011 01:02:00 GMT

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On Jul 12, 9:46 pm, Daft Pict <brianjmcl...@gmail.com> wrote:

- > Yes - that was the problem. Like you I got solid green in QT but 5fps
- > makes it work. THANKS!
- > However, being realistic I really need to have a slower frame rate.
- > I'm displaying a sequence of observations taken from a NASA probe and
- > I typically only have ~20 frames taken over a couple hours. To get the
- > best visualization of the changes we see I was writing the mp4 at 1
- > fps otherwise it's over in 3-4 seconds and hard to see! What are the
- > odds of a fix for the QT issue?

One way would be to make it a 5fps with the frames replicated 5 times.
It would probably not make the file size different, since the
compression algorithm would detect that the frames are the same.

Subject: Re: MP4/Animated GIF/JPEG woes....(Windows, IDL 8.1)

Posted by [chris_torrence@NOSPAM](#) on Wed, 13 Jul 2011 15:49:53 GMT

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Hi Brian,

I think what Andrew meant is that it is a fundamental limitation of Quicktime that it can't play movies with less than 5 fps. I don't think there is anything we can do. But perhaps you could use Paulo's suggestion of writing out each frame multiple times.

Regarding the WRITE_GIF problem, can you provide a simple reproduce case? I'm trying to reproduce it here, but I can't seem to get it to fail.

Thanks.
-Chris
ITTVIS

Subject: Re: MP4/Animated GIF/JPEG woes....(Windows, IDL 8.1)

Posted by [Kenneth P. Bowman](#) on Wed, 13 Jul 2011 18:29:43 GMT

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In article

<3ee0f01b-9f84-4fdc-9ee8-2b9d4c462c10@glegroupsg2000goo.googlegroups.com

> ,

Chris Torrence <gorthmog@gmail.com> wrote:

> Hi Brian,

>

> I think what Andrew meant is that it is a fundamental limitation of Quicktime that it can't
> play movies with less than 5 fps. I don't think there is anything we can do. But perhaps you
> could use Paulo's suggestion of writing out each frame multiple times.

>

> Thanks.

> -Chris

> ITTVIS

That is not a limitation of Quicktime. Quicktime Player 7 can create movies from still images with frame rates from 60 fps to 10 spf (seconds per frame). Other programs like GraphicConverter allow you to set arbitrary frame rates. I believe Quicktime is very flexible in this regard.

I think it might be a limitation of Windows media or MPEG files. I have had so many problems converting Quicktime movies on my Mac to .wmv or .mp4 files in order to give a presentation on a Windows machine at a conference that I have completely given up. It is not worth fighting to make Windows compatible presentations. (Microsoft "wins" that one.)

Ken Bowman

Subject: Re: MP4/Animated GIF/JPEG woes....(Windows, IDL 8.1)
Posted by [chris_torrence@NOSPAM](#) on Wed, 13 Jul 2011 19:52:31 GMT
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On Wednesday, July 13, 2011 12:29:43 PM UTC-6, Kenneth P. Bowman wrote:

> That is not a limitation of Quicktime. Quicktime Player 7 can create movies from still images
with
> frame rates from 60 fps to 10 spf (seconds per frame). Other programs like GraphicConverter
> allow you to set arbitrary frame rates. I believe Quicktime is very flexible in this regard.

Sorry, what I meant to say is that the Quicktime player (at least that we tried) cannot play *MP4* files with slow frame rates.

-Chris