
Subject: Transparent Image Overlays

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 17 Oct 2012 14:00:23 GMT

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Folks,

I have been doing a lot of work lately with LANDSAT images and I have continually found myself in need of a method of overlaying two or more images in a semi-transparent way. For example, I have a number of image masks (water mask, zonal masks, etc, that I would like to see on top of a LANDSAT image, so I can check for alignments and so on.

I have written software in the past (e.g., `cgBlendImage`) that can blend two images together, but I've found that software rather clunky to use in practice. To this end, I have made a number of improvements in `cglImage` lately that make it much easier to do this work.

In the past couple of days, I have introduced the following keywords to `cglImage`:

TRANSPARENT: Set this keyword to a value between 0 and 100 to add the image to the display window with this percentage of transparency. Works with 2D or true-color images.

```
cglImage, cgDemoData(7), CTIndex=0  
cglImage, cgDemoData(5), CTIndex=1, TRANSPARENT=50
```

The **POSITION** keyword can be used to position the transparent image on top of the background image.

CTINDEX: Select a color table index to load colors into **PALETTE**.

REVERSE: Reverse the color vectors selected with **CTINDEX**.

BREWER: Use **CTINDEX** to select Brewer color tables.

MAPCOORD: Pass `cglImage` a map coordinate/projection object (`cgMap`) from which it can obtain values for the **XRANGE** and **YRANGE** keywords.

With these keywords, I can easily overlap map projected images onto one another, using different color tables and various amounts of transparency. (Note that to position map projected images, you must also set the **OVERPLOT** keyword as well as passing the map coordinate object to set the axes ranges.) I work with GeoTiff images a lot, and I use `cgGeoMap` to create the map coordinate objects for the images by reading the GeoTiff image files directly.

I plan an article to discuss some of these new features shortly. But, you can download a new cgImage program from here:

<http://www.idlcoyote.com/programs/cgimage.pro>

Cheers,

David

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

Sepore ma de ni thue. ("Perhaps thos speakest truth.")
