
Subject: Q: Debugging: Unable to create pixmaps
Posted by [Wendy Gale](#) on Thu, 24 Jul 1997 07:00:00 GMT
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Could someone tell me what types of problems (ie, memory limitations, or out-of-range screen variables) cause the IDL error message:
Unable to create pixmaps

Thank you,
Wendy Gale

Subject: Re: Q: Debugging: Unable to create pixmaps
Posted by [davidf](#) on Thu, 24 Jul 1997 07:00:00 GMT
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Wendy Gale writes:

> Could someone tell me what types of problems (ie, memory limitations, or
> out-of-range screen variables) cause the IDL error message:
> Unable to create pixmaps

Pixmaps are created, essentially, in the video RAM of the display device. When a requested pixmap exceeds the video RAM capacity, some operating systems are smart enough to cache the pixmap in virtual memory. Most workstations, for example, have no difficulty making as many pixmaps as you like, as large as you like.

But other platforms do not have as sophisticated a memory management capability. For example, if you are not careful about cleaning up old pixmaps, etc, then PCs can often give you a message like this. (I see it all the time in IDL programming classes when I teach pixmaps. The students forget to delete the pixmap when they exit their widget program. They eventually run out of "pixmap memory".)

X-Terminals are the worst. In many cases, pixmaps can be made no larger than the size of the display. There is not much that can be done in this case, except to purchase more RAM for the X-term, making it about as expensive as the workstation you should have bought in the first place. :-)

Cheers,

David

David Fanning, Ph.D.
Fanning Software Consulting
Customizable IDL Programming Courses
Phone: 970-221-0438 E-Mail: davidf@dfanning.com
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com>
IDL 5 Reports: <http://www.dfanning.com/documents/anomaly5.html>
