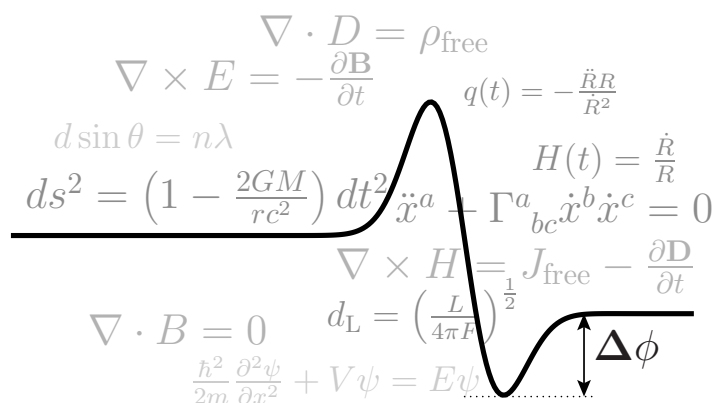# PyXPlot Users' Guide

A Command-line Plotting Package,
with Interface similar to that of Gnuplot,
which produces
Publication-Quality Output.

Version 0.7.1

$$\nabla \cdot D = \rho_{\text{free}}$$
$$\nabla \times E = -\frac{\partial \mathbf{B}}{\partial t}$$
$$q(t) = -\frac{\ddot{R}R}{\dot{R}^2}$$
$$d\sin\theta = n\lambda$$
$$H(t) = \frac{\dot{R}}{R}$$
$$ds^2 = \left(1 - \frac{2GM}{rc^2}\right)dt^2 \quad \ddot{x}^a + \Gamma^a_{bc}\dot{x}^b\dot{x}^c = 0$$
$$\nabla \times H = J_{\text{free}} - \frac{\partial \mathbf{D}}{\partial t}$$
$$\nabla \cdot B = 0 \qquad d_{\text{L}} = \left(\frac{L}{4\pi F}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}$$
$$\frac{\hbar^2}{2m}\frac{\partial^2\psi}{\partial x^2} + V\psi = E\psi$$
$$\Delta\phi$$

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Overview

PyXPlot is a stand-alone command-line graphing package that is simple to use yet produces high-quality attractive output suitable for use in publications. For ease of use, its interface is based heavily upon that of the popular Gnuplot plotting package, so users do not need to learn a whole new scripting language. However, it uses the PyX graphics library to produce its output, allowing the quality of its output to reach modern standards. The command-line interface has also been extended by addition of tools to carry out some commonly-required data-processing. An attempt has been made to rectify frequently-noted flaws in Gnuplot; for example, all text is now rendered automatically in the LaTeX typesetting environment, making it straightforward to label graphs with mathematical expressions. The multiplot environment has been re-designed from scratch, making it easy to produce galleries of plots with basic vector graphics around them. For some samples of the results of which PyXPlot is capable, the reader is referred to the project website[1].

The ability to represent data visually, usually as some form of graph, is a requirement for any scientific or mathematical work. Historically, a very widely-used open-source plotting programme has been Gnuplot, the principal attraction of which is its easy-to-use command-line interface, which allows data files to be turned into graphs within seconds. One of its main rivals has been Pgplot, which is somewhat more flexible, but much less easy to use; it can only be called from within a programme, and so code must be written to produce each plot. This is potentially time consuming, and it is necessary for the user to have some programming experience.

Alongside these, several commercial packages have existed, including Maple, Mathematica and SuperMongo. These can typically produce prettier results than their free counterparts, but carry with them consider-

---

[1] http://www.pyxplot.org.uk/

able price tags and licensing restrictions. Moreover, none of these are as easy to use as Gnuplot.

Both Gnuplot and Pgplot were developed in the mid-1980s. At that time, the quality of their output seemed state-of-the-art. But this is less true today. In most journal articles today, the text and equations are rendered with a high degree of professionalism by the LaTeX typesetting system. But all too often, the graphs are less neat. The same is often true of the slides used in presentations: graphs are often rendered with less professionalism than the text around them.

In the early 2000s, several new free graphing packages emerged, among them MATPLOTLIB and PYX. These have significantly improved upon the quality of the plots produced by Gnuplot and Pgplot. However, both are libraries which can be called from within the Python programming language, rather than stand-alone plotting packages. They are not as easy to use as Gnuplot. For visualising data at speed, Gnuplot remains the best option.

The command-line interface of Gnuplot is very flexible: it can be controlled interactively, by typing commands into a terminal, it can read a list of commands in from a file, or it can receive commands through a UNIX pipe from another process. These modes of use are all possible in PyXPlot too.

We argue that Gnuplot's interface brings another distinct advantage to PyXPlot in comparison with plotting packages which insist upon being called from within a programming language. PyXPlot requires that data be written to a file on disk before it can be plotted. When plotting is done from within a programming language, this can tempt the user into writing programmes which both perform calculations and plot the results immediately. This sounds neat, but it can be a dangerous temptation. Remembering to store a copy of the data used to produce a graph becomes a secondary priority. Months later, when the need arises to replot the same data in a different form, or to compare it with newer data, remembering how to use a hurriedly written programme can prove tricky – especially if the programme was originally written by someone else. But a simple data file is quite straightforward to plot.

The similarity of PyXPlot's interface to that of Gnuplot is such that simple scripts written for Gnuplot should work with PyXPlot with minimal modification; Gnuplot users should be able to get started very quickly. However, PyXPlot is still a work in progress, and a small number of Gnuplot's features are still missing. A detailed list of which features are supported can be found in Section 2.14. The new features which have been added to the interface are described in Chapters 3 – 6.

A brief overview of Gnuplot's interface is provided for novice users in Chapter 2. Past Gnuplot users may skip over this chapter, though their attention is drawn to one of the key changes to the interface – namely that all textual labels on plots are now rendered using the LaTeX typesetting

environment. This does unfortunately introduce some incompatibility with
Gnuplot, since some strings which were valid before are no longer valid (see
Section 2.4 for more details). For example:

✗   `set xlabel 'x^2'`

would have been valid in Gnuplot, but now needs to be written in LaTeX
mathmode as:

✔   `set xlabel '$x^2$'`

The nuisance of this incompatibility is surely far outweighed by the power
that LaTeX brings, however. For users with no prior knowledge of LaTeX
we recommend Tobias Oetiker's excellent introduction, *The Not So Short
Guide to LaTeX2ε*[2].

1.2 System Requirements

PyXPlot works on most UNIX-like operating systems. We have tested it
under Linux, Solaris and MacOS X, and believe that it should work on
other similar systems. It requires that the following software packages (not
included) be installed:

Python	(Version 2.4 or later)
Latex	(Used for all textual labels)
ImageMagick	(needed for the gif, png and jpg terminals)

The following package is not *required* for installation, but many PyXPlot fea-
tures are disabled when it is not present, including the `fit` and `spline` com-
mands and the integration of functions. It is very strongly recommended:

Scipy   (Python Scientific Library)

The following package is not *required* for installation, but it is not possible
to use the X11 terminal, i.e. to display plots on the screen, without it:

Ghostview   (used for the X11 terminal)

Debian and Ubuntu users can find the above software in the packages
`texlive`, `gv`, `imagemagick`, `python`, `python-scipy`.

---

[2]Download from:
`http://www.ctan.org/tex-archive/info/lshort/english/lshort.pdf`

1.3   Installation

1.3.1   Installation within Linux Distributions

PyXPlot is available as a user-installable package within some Linux distributions. Gentoo[3], Ubuntu[4] and Debian already have such packages. Alternatively, and to ensure that they are using the latest version, Debian and Ubuntu users can download the package from the PyXPlot website and install it manually by typing:

```
dpkg -i pyxplot_0.7.1.deb
```

1.3.2   Installation as User

The following steps describe the installation of PyXPlot from a `.tar.gz` archive by a user without superuser (i.e. root) access to his machine. It is assumed that the packages listed above have already been installed; if they are not, you will need to contact your system administrator.

- Unpack the distributed .tar.gz:

  ```
  tar xvfz pyxplot_0.7.1.tar.gz
  cd pyxplot
  ```

- Run the installation script:

  ```
  ./configure
  make
  ```

- Finally, start PyXPlot:

  ```
  ./pyxplot
  ```

1.3.3   System-wide Installation

Having completed the steps described above, PyXPlot may be installed system-wide by a superuser with the following additional step:

```
make install
```

---

[3]See `http://gentoo-portage.com/sci-visualization/pyxplot`

[4]Note that at the time of writing, there is an error in the packaging of PyXPlot in Ubuntu which means that the `tetex-extra` package, upon which PyXPlot depends, is not automatically installed with PyXPlot.

By default, the PyXPlot executable installs to `/usr/local/bin/pyxplot`. If desired, this installation path may be modified in the file `Makefile.skel`, by changing the variable `USRDIR` in the first line to an alternative desired installation location.

PyXPlot may now be started by any system user, simply by typing:

```
pyxplot
```

1.4 Credits

We would like to express our gratitude to several people who have contributed to PyXPlot – first and foremost to Jörg Lehmann, André Wobst and Michael Schindler for writing the PyX graphics library for Python, upon which this software is heavily built. We would also like to think all of the users who have got in touch with us by email since PyXPlot was first released on the web. Your feedback and suggestions have been gratefully received.

1.5 Legal Blurb

This manual and the software which it describes are both copyright © Dominic Ford 2006-8, Ross Church 2008. They are distributed under the GNU General Public License (GPL) Version 2, a copy of which is provided in the `COPYING` file in this distribution. Alternatively, it may be downloaded from the web, from the following location:
`http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/gpl.html`.

Chapter 2

First Steps With PyXPlot

In this chapter, we provide a brief overview of the basic operation of PyX-Plot, principally covering those areas of syntax which are borrowed directly from Gnuplot. Users who are already familiar with Gnuplot may wish to skim or skip this chapter, though Section 2.4, which describes the use of LaTeX to render text, and Section 2.14, which details those parts of Gnuplot's interface that are not supported by PyXPlot, may be of interest. In the following chapters, we shall go on to describe the ways in which PyXPlot extends Gnuplot's interface.

Describing Gnuplot's interface in its entirety is a substantial task, and what follows is only an overview; novice users may find many excellent tutorials on the web which will greatly supplement what is provided below.

2.1 Getting Started

The simplest way to start PyXPlot is to type '`pyxplot`' at a shell prompt to start an interactive session. A PyXPlot command-line prompt will appear, into which commands can be typed. PyXPlot can be exited either by typing `exit`, `quit`, or by pressing CTRL-D.

As you begin to plot increasingly complicated graphs, the number of commands required to set them up and plot them will grow. It will soon become preferable, instead of typing these commands into an interactive session, to store lists of commands as scripts, which are simply text files containing PyXPlot commands. These may be executed by passing the filename of the command script to PyXPlot on the shell command line, for example:

```
pyxplot foo.ppl
```

In this case, PyXPlot would execute all of the commands in the file `foo.ppl` and then exit immediately afterwards. By convention, we suffix the filenames

of PyXPlot command scripts with '`.ppl`', though this is not strictly neces-
sary. Several filenames may be passed on a single command line, indicating
a series of scripts to be executed in sequence:

```
pyxplot foo1.ppl foo2.ppl foo3.ppl
```

It is possible to use a single PyXPlot session both interactively and from
command scripts. One way to do this is to pass the magic filename '–' on
the command line:

```
pyxplot foo1.ppl - foo2.ppl
```

This magic filename represents an interactive session, which commences after
the execution of `foo1.ppl`, and should be terminated in the usual way after
use, with the `exit` or `quit` commands. Afterwards, the command script
`foo2.ppl` would execute.

From within an interactive session, it is possible to run a command script
using the `load` command:

```
pyxplot> load 'foo.ppl'
```

This example would have the same effect as typing the contents of the file
`foo.ppl` into the present session.

Usually a text editor is used to produce PyXPlot command scripts, but
the `save` command may also assist. This stores a history of the commands
executed in the present interactive session to file.

Command files can include comment lines, which should begin with a
hash character, for example:

```
# This is a comment
```

Comments may also be placed on the same line as commands, for example:

```
set nokey # I'll have no key on _my_ plot
```

Long commands may be split over multiple lines in the script by termi-
nating each line of it with a backslash character, whereupon the following
line will be appended to it.

2.2   First Plots

The basic workhorse command of PyXPlot is the `plot` command, which
is used to produce all plots. The following simple example would plot the
function $\sin(x)$:

```
plot sin(x)
```

It is also possible to plot data stored in files on disk. The following would plot data from a file `data.dat`, taking the x-co-ordinate of each point from the first column of the data file, and the y-co-ordinate from the second. The data file is assumed to be in plain text format[1], with columns separated by whitespace and/or commas[2]:

```
plot 'data.dat'
```

Several items can be plotted on the same graph by separating them by commas:

```
plot 'data.dat', sin(x), cos(x)
```

It is possible to define one's own variables and functions, and then plot them:

```
a = 2
b = 1
c = 1.5
f(x) = a*(x**2) + b*x + c
plot f(x)
```

To unset a variable or function once it has been set, the following syntax should be used:

```
a =
f(x) =
```

2.3 Printing Text

PyXPlot has a `print` command for displaying strings and the results of calculations to the terminal, for example:

```
a=2
print "Hello World!"
print a

f(x) = x**2
a=3
print "The value of",a,"squared is",f(a)
```

Values may also be substituted into strings using the `%` operator, which works in a similar fashion to Python string substitution operator[3]. The list of values to be substituted into the string should be a ()-bracketed list[4]:

---

[1] If the filename of a data file ends with a `.gz` suffix, it is assuming to be gzipped plaintext, and is decoded accordingly.

[2] This format is compatible with the Comma Separated Values (CSV) format produced by many applications, including Microsoft Excel.

[3] For a description of this, see Guido van Rossum's *Python Library Reference*: `http://docs.python.org/lib/typesseq-strings.html`

[4] Unlike in Python, the brackets are obligatory; `'%d'%2` is *not* valid in PyXPlot.

Trajectories of rockets fired with speed v and angle θ
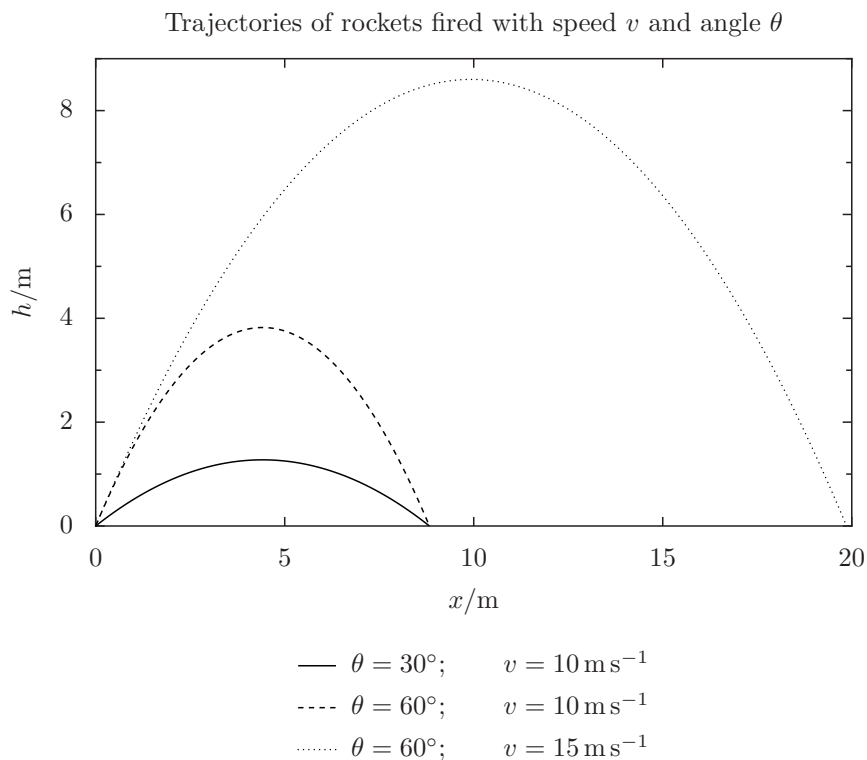
Figure 2.1: A plot of the trajectories of rockets fired with different initial velocities. The key demonstrates the use of LaTeX to render mathematical symbols attractively. The full PyXPlot script used to generate this figure is available on the PyXPlot website at http://www.pyxplot.org.uk/examples/Manual/01axislab/.

```
print "The value of %d squared is %d."%(a,f(a))
print "The %s of f(%f) is %d."%("value",sqrt(2),f(sqrt(2)))
```

2.4 Axis Labels and Titles

Labels can be added to the two axes of a plot, and a title put at the top. Labels should be placed between either single (') or double (") quotes. For example:

```
set xlabel "$x/{\rm m}$"
set ylabel "$h/{\rm m}$"
set title 'Trajectories of rockets fired with speed $v$ and \
angle $\theta$'
```

The output produced by these commands is shown in Figure 2.1. Note that the labels and title, and indeed all text labels in PyXPlot, are rendered using LaTeX, and so any LaTeX commands can be used. As a caveat, however, this does mean that care needs to be taken to escape any of LaTeX's reserved characters – i.e.: \ & % # { } $ _ ^ or ~.

Because of the use of quotes to delimit text labels, special care needs to be taken when apostrophe and quote characters are used. The following command would raise an error, because the apostrophe would be interpreted as marking the end of the text label:

✗　　　　`set xlabel 'My plot's X axis'`

The following would achieve the desired effect:

✔　　　　`set xlabel "My plot's X axis"`

To make it possible to render LaTeX strings containing both single and double quote characters – for example, to put a German umlaut on the name 'Jörg' in the LaTeX string 'J\"org's Data' – PyXPlot recognises the backslash character to be an escape character when followed by either ' or " in a LaTeX string. This is the *only* case in which PyXPlot considers \ an escape character. To render the example string above, one would type:

```
set xlabel "J\\"org's Data"
```

In this example, two backslashes are required. The first is the LaTeX escape character used to produce the umlaut; the second is a PyXPlot escape character, used so that the " character is not interpreted as delimiting the string.

Having set labels and titles, they may be removed thus:

```
set xlabel ''
set ylabel ''
set title ''
```

These are two other ways of removing the title from a plot:

```
set notitle
unset title
```

The `unset` command may be followed by almost any word that can follow the `set` command, such as `xlabel` or `title`, to return that setting to its default configuration. The `reset` command restores all configurable parameters to their default states.

2.5   Operators and Functions

As has already been seen above, some mathematical functions such as $\sin(x)$ are pre-defined within PyXPlot. A list of all of PyXPlot's pre-defined functions is given in Table 2.1. A list of operators recognised by PyXPlot is given in Table 2.3.

2.6   Plotting Data files

In the simple example of the previous section, we plotted the first column of a data file against the second. It is also possible to plot any arbitrary column of a data file against any other; the syntax for doing this is:

```
plot 'data.dat' using 3:5
```

This example would plot the contents of the fifth column of the file `data.dat` on the vertical axis, against the the contents of the third column on the horizontal axis. As mentioned above, columns in data files can be separated using whitespace and/or commas. Algebraic expressions may also be used in place of column numbers, for example:

```
plot 'data.dat' using (3+$1+$2):(2+$3)
```

In such expressions, column numbers are prefixed by dollar signs, to distinguish them from numerical constants. The example above would plot the sum of the values in the first two columns of the data file, plus three, on the horizontal axis, against two plus the value in the third column on the vertical axis. A more advanced example might be:

```
plot 'data.dat' using 3.0:$($2)
```

This would place all of the data points on the line $x = 3$, meanwhile drawing their vertical positions from the value of some column n in the data file, where the value of n is itself read from the second column of the data file.

Later, in Section 4.4, I shall discuss how to plot rows of data files against one another, in horizontally arranged data files.

It is also possible to plot data from only selected lines within a data file. When PyXPlot reads a data file, it looks for any blank lines in the file. It divides the data file up into *data blocks*, each being separated from the next by a single blank line. The first datablock is numbered 0, the next 1, and so on.

When two or more blank lines are found together, the data file is divided up into *index blocks*. The first index block is numbered 0, the next 1, and so on. Each index block may be made up of a series of data blocks. To clarify this, a labelled example data file is shown in Figure 2.2.

$\mathrm{acos}(x)$	Return the arc cosine (measured in radians) of x.
$\mathrm{asin}(x)$	Return the arc sine (measured in radians) of x.
$\mathrm{atan}(x)$	Return the arc tangent (measured in radians) of x.
$\mathrm{atan2}(y, x)$	Return the arc tangent (measured in radians) of y/x. Unlike $\mathrm{atan}(y/x)$, the signs of both x and y are considered.
$\mathrm{ceil}(x)$	Return the ceiling of x as a float. This is the smallest integral value $\geq x$.
$\mathrm{cos}(x)$	Return the cosine of x (measured in radians).
$\mathrm{cosh}(x)$	Return the hyperbolic cosine of x.
$\mathrm{degrees}(x)$	Convert angle x from radians to degrees.
$\mathrm{erf}(x)$	Return the error function, i.e. the Gaussian (normal) distribution function.
$\mathrm{exp}(x)$	Return e raised to the power of x.
$\mathrm{fabs}(x)$	Return the absolute value of the float x.
$\mathrm{floor}(x)$	Return the floor of x as a float. This is the largest integral value $\leq x$.
$\mathrm{fmod}(x, y)$	Return fmod(x, y), according to platform C. x % y may differ.
$\mathrm{gamma}(x)$	Return the gamma function.
$\mathrm{hypot}(x, y)$	Return the Euclidean distance, $\sqrt{x^2 + y^2}$.
$\mathrm{ldexp}(x, i)$	Return $x \times 2^i$.
$\mathrm{log}(x[, base])$	Return the logarithm of x to the given base. If the base not specified, returns the natural logarithm (base e) of x.
$\mathrm{log10}(x)$	Return the base 10 logarithm of x.
$\mathrm{max}(x,y,...)$	Return the greatest of the numerical values supplied.
$\mathrm{min}(x,y,...)$	Return the least of the numerical values supplied.

Table 2.1: A list of mathematical functions which are pre-defined within PyXPlot (cont'd. in Table 2.2).

pow(x, y)	Return x^y.
radians(x)	Converts angle x from degrees to radians.
random()	Return a pseudo-random number in the range $0 \rightarrow 1$.
sin(x)	Return the sine of x (measured in radians).
sinh(x)	Return the hyperbolic sine of x.
sqrt(x)	Return the square root of x.
tan(x)	Return the tangent of x (measured in radians).
tanh(x)	Return the hyperbolic tangent of x.

Table 2.2: A list of mathematical functions which are pre-defined within PyXPlot (cont'd. from Table 2.1).

+	Algebraic sum
−	Algebraic subtraction
*	Algebraic multiplication
**	Algebraic exponentiation
/	Algebraic division
%	Modulo operator
<<	Left binary shift
>>	Right binary shift
&	Binary and
|	Binary or
^	Logical exclusive or
<	Magnitude comparison
>	Magnitude comparison
<=	Magnitude comparison
>=	Magnitude comparison
==	Equality comparison
!=	Equality comparison
<>	Alias for !=
and	Logical and
or	Logical or

Table 2.3: A list of mathematical operators which PyXPlot recognises.

0.0	0.0	Start of index 0, data block 0.
1.0	1.0	
2.0	2.0	
3.0	3.0	
		A single blank line marks the start of a new data block.
0.0	5.0	Start of index 0, data block 1.
1.0	4.0	
2.0	2.0	
		A double blank line marks the start of a new index.
		...
0.0	1.0	Start of index 1, data block 0.
1.0	1.0	
		A single blank line marks the start of a new data block.
0.0	5.0	Start of index 1, data block 1.
		<etc>

Figure 2.2: An example PyXPlot data file – the data file is shown in the two left-hand columns, and commands are shown to the right.

By default, when a data file is plotted, all data blocks in all index blocks are plotted. To plot only the data from one index block, the following syntax may be used:

```
plot 'data.dat' index 1
```

To achieve the default behaviour of plotting all index blocks, the `index` modifier should be followed by a negative number.

It is also possible to specify which lines and/or data blocks to plot from within each index. To do so, the `every` modifier is used, which takes up to six values, separated by colons:

```
plot 'data.dat' every a:b:c:d:e:f
```

The values have the following meanings:

a	Plot data only from every a th line in data file.
b	Plot only data from every b th block within each index block.
c	Plot only from line c onwards within each block.
d	Plot only data from block d onwards within each index block.
e	Plot only up to the e th line within each block.
f	Plot only up to the f th block within each index block.

Any or all of these values can be omitted, and so the following would both be valid statements:

```
plot 'data.dat' index 1 every 2:3
plot 'data.dat' index 1 every ::3
```

The first would plot only every other data point from every third data block; the second from the third line onwards within each data block.

A final modifier for selecting which parts of a data file are plotted is `select`, which plots only those data points which satisfy some given criterion. This is described in Section 4.3.

2.7   Directing Where Output Goes

By default, when PyXPlot is used interactively, all plots are displayed on the screen. It is also possible to produce postscript output, to be read into other programs or embedded into L^AT_EX documents, as well as a variety of other graphical formats. The `set terminal` command[5] is used to specify the output format that is required, and the `set output` command is used to specify the file to which output should be directed. For example,

```
set terminal postscript
set output 'myplot.eps'
plot sin(x)
```

would output a postscript plot of $\sin(x)$ to the file `myplot.eps`.

The `set terminal` command can also be used to configure various output options within each supported file format. For example, the following commands would produce black-and-white or colour output respectively:

```
set terminal monochrome
set terminal colour
```

The former is useful for preparing plots for black-and-white publications, the latter for preparing plots for colourful presentations.

Both encapsulated and non-encapsulated postscript can be produced. The former is recommended for producing figures to embed into documents, the latter for plots which are to be printed without further processing. The `postscript` terminal produces the latter; the `eps` terminal should be used to produce the former. Similarly the `pdf` terminal produces files in the portable document format (pdf) read by Adobe Acrobat:

```
set terminal postscript
set terminal eps
set terminal pdf
```

It is also possible to produce plots in the gif, png and jpeg graphic formats, as follows:

```
set terminal gif
set terminal png
set terminal jpg
```

---

[5]Gnuplot users should note that the syntax of the `set terminal` command in PyXPlot is somewhat different from that which they are used to; see Section 3.4.

More than one of the above keywords can be combined on a single line, for example:

```
set terminal postscript colour
set terminal gif monochrome
```

To return to the default state of displaying plots on screen, the `x11` terminal should be selected:

```
set terminal x11
```

For more details of the `set terminal` command, including how to produce gif and png images with transparent backgrounds, see Section 3.4.

We finally note that, after changing terminals, the `replot` command is especially useful; it repeats the last `plot` command. If any plot items are placed after it, they are added to the pre-existing plot.

2.8 Setting the Size of Output

The widths of plots may be set be means of two commands – `set size` and `set width`. Both are equivalent, and should be followed by the desired width measured in centimetres, for example:

```
set width 20
```

The `set size` command can also be used to set the aspect ratio of plots by following it with the keyword `ratio`. The number which follows should be the desired ratio of height to width. The following, for example, would produce plots three times as high as they are wide:

```
set size ratio 3.0
```

The command `set size noratio` returns to PyXPlot's default aspect ratio of the golden ratio[6], i.e. $\left((1+\sqrt{5})/2\right)^{-1}$. The special command `set size square` sets the aspect ratio to unity.

---

[6] Artists have used this aspect ratio since ancient times. The Pythagoreans observed its frequent occurance in geometry, and Phidias (490 - 430 BC) used it repeatedly in the architecture of the Parthenon. Renaissance artists such as Dalí, who were in many ways disciples of classical aesthetics, often used the ratio. Leonardi Da Vinci observed that many bodily proportions closely approximate the golden ratio. Some even went so far as to suggest that the ratio had a divine origin (e.g. Pacioli 1509). As for the authors of this present work, we do assert that plots with golden aspect ratios are pleasing to the eye, but leave the ponderance of its theological significance as an exercise for the reader.

2.9   Data Styles

By default, data from files are plotted with points and functions are plotted with lines. However, either kinds of data can be plotted in a variety of ways. To plot a function with points, for example, the following syntax is used[7]:

```
plot sin(x) with points
```

The number of points displayed (i.e. the number of samples of the function) can be set as follows:

```
set samples 100
```

Likewise, data files can be plotted with a line connecting the data points:

```
plot 'data.dat' with lines
```

A variety of other styles are available. The `linespoints` plot style combines both the `points` and `lines` styles, drawing lines through points. Errorbars can also be drawn as follows:

```
plot 'data.dat' with yerrorbars
```

In this case, three columns of data need to be specified: the x- and y-coordinates of each data point, plus the size of the vertical errorbar on that data point. By default, the first three columns of the data file are used, but once again (see Section 2.6), the `using` modifier can be used:

```
plot 'data.dat' using 2:3:7 with yerrorbars
```

More details of the `errorbars` plot style can be found in Section 4.1.4. Other plot styles supported by PyXPlot are listed in Section 8.19.2, and their details can be found in many Gnuplot tutorials. Bar charts will be discussed further in Section 4.2.

The modifiers `pointtype` and `linetype`, which can be abbreviated to `pt` and `lt` respectively, can also be placed after the `with` modifier. Each should be followed by an integer. The former specifies what shape of points should be used to plot the dataset, and the latter whether a line should be continuous, dotted, dash-dotted, etc. Different integers correspond to different styles.

The default plotting style referred to above can also be changed. For example:

```
set style data lines
```

would change the default style used for plotting data from files to lines. Similarly, the `set style function` command changes the default style used when functions are plotted.

---

[7]Note that when a plot command contains `using`, `every` and `with` modifiers, the `with` modifier must come last.

2.10 Setting Axis Ranges

In Section 2.2, the `set xlabel` configuration command was previously introduced for placing text labels on axes. In this section, the configuration of axes is extended to setting their ranges.

By default, PyXPlot automatically scales axes to some sensible range which contains all of the plotted data. However, it is possible for the user to override this and set his own range. This can be done directly from the plot command, for example:

```
plot [-1:1][-2:2] sin(x)
```

The ranges are specified immediately after the `plot` command, with the syntax `[minimum:maximum]`.[8] The first specified range applies to the x-axis, and the second to the y-axis.[9] Any of the values can be omitted, for example:

```
plot [:][-2:2] sin(x)
```

would only set a range on the y-axis.

Alternatively, ranges can be set before the `plot` statement, using the `set xrange` command, for example:

```
set xrange [-2:2]
set y2range [a:b]
```

If an asterisk is supplied in place of either of the limits in this command, then any limit which had previously been set is switched off, and the axis returns to its default autoscaling behaviour:

```
set xrange [-2:*]
```

A similar effect may be obtained using the `set autoscale` command, which takes a list of the axes to which it is to apply. Both the upper and lower limits of these axes are set to scale automatically. If no list is supplied, then the command is applied to all axes.

```
set autoscale x y
set autoscale
```

Axes can be set to have logarithmic scales by using the `set logscale` command, which also takes a list of axes to which it should apply. Its converse is `set nologscale`:

---

[8]An alternative valid syntax is to replace the colon with the word `to`: `[minimum to maximum]`.

[9]As will be discussed in Section 4.5, if further ranges are specified, they apply to the $x2$-axis, then the $y2$-axis, and so forth.

```
set logscale
set nologscale y x x2
```

Further discussion of the configuration of axes can be found in Section 4.5.

2.11   Function Fitting

It is possible to fit functional forms to data points read from files by using the `fit` command. A simple example might be:[10]

```
f(x) = a*x+b
fit f() 'data.dat' index 1 using 2:3 via a,b
```

The first line specifies the functional form which is to be used. The coefficients within this function which are to be varied during the fitting process are listed after the keyword `via` in the `fit` command. The modifiers `index`, `every` and `using` have the same meanings here as in the plot command.[11] For example, given the following data file which contains a sampled square wave, entitled "square.dat":

```
    0.314159              1
    0.942478              1
    1.570796              1
    2.199115              1
    2.827433              1
    3.455752             -1
    4.084070             -1
    4.712389             -1
    5.340708             -1
    5.969026             -1
```

the following script fits a truncated Fourier series to it. The output can be found in Figure 2.3.

```
f(x) = a1*sin(x) + a3*sin(3*x) + a5*sin(5*x)
fit f() 'square.dat' via a1, a3, a5
set xlabel '$x$' ; set ylabel '$y$'
plot 'square.dat' title 'data' with points pointsize 2, \
     f(x) title 'Fitted function' with lines
```

---

[10]In Gnuplot, this example would have been written `fit f(x) ...`, rather than `fit f() ...`. This syntax is supported in PyXPlot, but is deprecated.

[11]The `select` modifier, to be introduced in Section 4.3 can also be used.
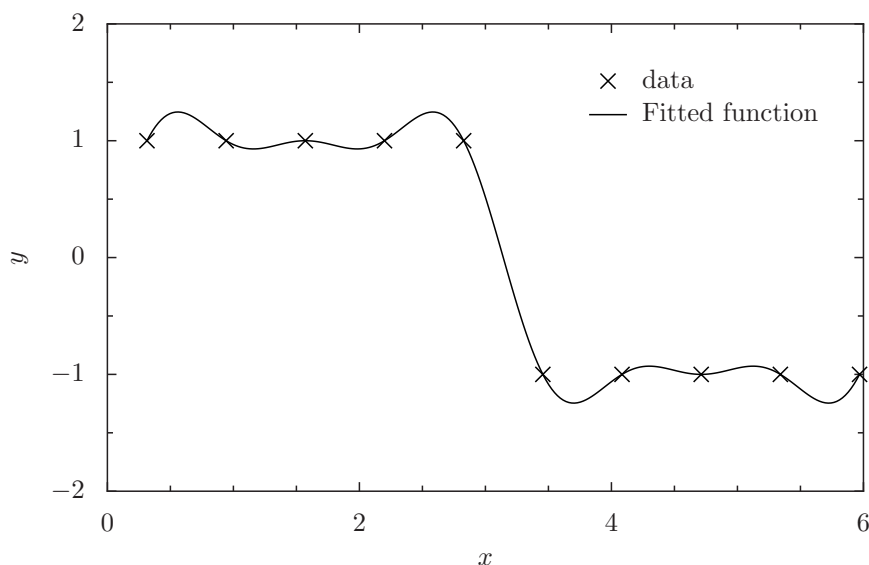
Figure 2.3: The output from a script that fits a truncated Fourier series to a sampled square wave. Even with only three terms the Gibbs pheonomenon is becoming apparent (see `http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gibbs_phenomenon` for an explanation).

This is useful for producing best-fit lines[12], and also has applications for estimating the gradients of datasets. The syntax is essentially identical to that used by Gnuplot, though a few points are worth noting:

- When fitting a function of n variables, at least $n+1$ columns (or rows – see Section 4.4) must be specified after the `using` modifier. By default, the first $n + 1$ columns are used. These correspond to the values of each of the n inputs to the function, plus finally the value which the output from the function is aiming to match.

- If an additional column is specified, then this is taken to contain the standard error in the value that the output from the function is aiming to match, and can be used to weight the data points which are input into the `fit` command.

- By default, the starting values for each of the fitting parameters is 1.0. However, if the variables to be used in the fitting process are already set before the `fit` command is called, these initial values are used instead. For example, the following would use the initial values $\{a = 100, b = 50\}$:

---

[12]Another way of producing best-fit lines is to use a cubic spline; more details are given in Section 6.2

```
f(x) = a*x+b
a = 100
b = 50
fit f() 'data.dat' index 1 using 2:3 via a,b
```

- As with all numerical fitting procedures, the `fit` command comes with caveats. It uses a generic fitting algorithm, and may not work well with poorly behaved or ill-constrained problems. It works best when all of the values it is attempting to fit are of order unity. For example, in a problem where a was of order 10^{10}, the following might fail:

```
f(x) = a*x
fit f() 'data.dat' via a
```

  However, better results might be achieved if a were artificially made of order unity, as in the following script:

```
f(x) = 1e10*a*x
fit f() 'data.dat' via a
```

- A series of ranges may be specified after the `fit` command, using the same syntax as in the `plot` command, as described in Section 2.10. If ranges are specified then only data points falling within these ranges are used in the fitting process; the ranges refer to each of the n variables of the fitted function in order.

- For those interested in the mathematical details, the workings of the `fit` command is discussed in more detail in Chapter D.

At the end of the fitting process, the best-fitting values of each parameter are output to the terminal, along with an estimate of the uncertainty in each. Additionally, the Hessian, covariance and correlation matrices are output in both human-readable and machine-readable formats, allowing a more complete assessment of the probability distribution of the parameters.

2.12   Interactive Help

In addition to this *Users' Guide*, PyXPlot also has a `help` command, which provides a hierarchical source of information. Typing `help` alone gives a brief introduction to the help system, as well as a list of topics on which help is available. To display help on any given topic, type `help` followed by the name of the topic. For example:

```
help commands
```

provides information on PyXPlot's commands. Some topics have sub-topics, which are listed at the end of each page. To view them, add further words to the end of your help request – an example might be:

```
help commands help
```

which would display help on the `help` command itself.

2.13 Shell Commands

Shell commands may be executed directly from within PyXPlot by prefixing them with an `!` character. The remainder of the line is sent directly to the shell, for example:

```
!ls -l
```

Semi-colons cannot be used to place further PyXPlot commands after a shell command on the same line.

✗   `!ls -l ; set key top left`

It is also possible to substitute the output of a shell command into a PyXPlot command. To do this, the shell command should be enclosed in back-quotes (`). For example:

```
a='ls -l *.ppl | wc -l'
print "The current directory contains %d PyXPlot scripts."%(a)
```

It should be noted that back-quotes can only be used outside quotes. For example:

✗   `set xlabel ''ls''`

will not work. The best way to do this would be:

✔   `set xlabel 'echo "'" ; ls ; echo "'"'`

Note that it is not possible to change the current working directory by sending the `cd` command to a shell, as this command would only change the working directory of the shell in which the single command is executed:

✗   `!cd ..`

PyXPlot has its own `cd` command for this purpose, as well as its own `pwd` command:

✔   `cd ..`

2.14   Differences Between PyXPlot and Gnuplot

Because PyXPlot is still work in progress, it does not implement all of the features of Gnuplot. It currently does not implement any three-dimensional or surface plotting – i.e. the `splot` command of Gnuplot. It also does not support the plotting of parametric functions.

Some of Gnuplot's features have been significantly re-worked to improve upon their operation. The prime example is Gnuplot's multiplot mode, which allows multiple graphs to be placed side-by-side. While we retain a similar syntax, we have made it significantly more flexible. The use of dual axes is another example: PyXPlot now places no limit on the number of parallel horizontal and vertical axes which may be drawn on a graph.

These extensions to Gnuplot's interface are described in detail in the following chapters.

Chapter 3

PyXPlot and the Outside World

This chapter describes PyXPlot as a UNIX programme, and how it can be interfaced with other programs.

3.1 Command Line Switches

From the shell command line, PyXPlot accepts the following switches which modify its behaviour:

-h --help	Display a short help message listing the available command-line switches.
-v --version	Display the current version number of PyXPlot.
-q --quiet	Turn off the display of the welcome message on startup.
-V --verbose	Display the welcome message on startup, as happens by default.
-c --colour	Use colour highlighting[1] to display output in green, warning messages in amber, and error messages in red.[2] These colours can be changed in the `terminal` section of the configuration file; see Section 7.1 for more details.
-m --monochrome	Do not use colour highlighting, as happens by default.

---

[1]This will only function on terminals which support colour output.

[2]The authors apologise to those members of the population who are red/green colour-blind, but draws their attention to the following sentence.

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3.2   Command Histories

When PyXPlot is used interactively, its command-line environment is based upon the GNU Readline Library. This means that the up and down arrow keys can be used to repeat or modify previously executed commands. Each user's command history is stored in his homespace in a history file called `.pyxplot_history`, which allows PyXPlot to remember command histories between sessions. Additionally, a `save` command is provided, allowing the user to save his command history from the present session to a text file; this has the following syntax:

```
save 'output_filename.ppl'
```

The related `history` command outputs the history to the terminal. This outputs not only the history of the present session, but also commands entered in previous sessions, which can be up to several hundred lines long. It can optionally be followed by a number, to display the last n commands, e.g.:

```
history 20
```

3.3   Reading data from a pipe

PyXPlot usually reads data from a file, but it possible to read data via a pipe from standard input. To do this one uses the magic filename '`-`':

```
plot '-' with lines
```

This facility should be used with caution; it is generally preferable to write data to a file in order that it can be perused at a later date.

3.4   Formatting and Terminals

In this section, we describe the commands used to control the format of the graphic output produced by PyXPlot. This continues the discussion from Section 2.7 of how the `set terminal` command can be used to produce plots in various graphic formats, such as postscript files, jpeg images, etc.

Many of these *terminals* – the word we use to describe an output format – accept additional parameters which configure the exact appearance of the output produced. For example, the default terminal, `X11`, which displays plots on the screen, has such settings. By default, each time a new plot is generated, if the previous plot is still open on the display, the old plot is replaced with the new one. This way, only one plot window is open at

any one time. This behaviour has the advantage that the desktop does not become flooded with plot windows.

If this is not desired, however – for example if you want to compare two plots – old graphs can be kept visible when plotting further graphs by using the the X11_multiwindow terminal:

```
set terminal X11_singlewindow
plot sin(x)
plot cos(x)  <-- first plot window disappears
```

c.f.:

```
set terminal X11_multiwindow
plot sin(x)
plot cos(x)  <-- first plot window remains
```

As an additional option, the X11_persist terminal keeps plot windows open after PyXPlot exits; the above two terminals close all plot windows upon exit.

If the enlarge modifier is used with the set terminal command then the whole plot is enlarged, or, in the case of large plots, shrunk, to the current paper size, minus a small margin. The aspect ratio of the plot is preserved. This is most useful with the postscript terminal, when preparing a plot to send directly to a printer.

As there are many changes to the options accepted by the set terminal command in comparison to those understood by Gnuplot, the syntax of PyXPlot's command is given below, followed by a list of the recognised settings:

```
set terminal { X11_singlewindow | X11_multiwindow | X11_persist |
               postscript | eps | pdf | gif | png | jpg }
             { colour | color | monochrome }
             { portrait | landscape }
             { invert | noinvert }
             { transparent | solid }
             { antialias | noantialias }
             { enlarge | noenlarge }
```

`x11_singlewindow`	Displays plots on the screen (in X11 windows, using Ghostview). Each time a new plot is generated, it replaces the old one, to prevent the desktop from becoming flooded with old plots.[3] [**default when running interactively; see below**]
`x11_multiwindow`	As above, but each new plot appears in a new window, and the old plots remain visible. As many plots as may be desired can be left on the desktop simultaneously.
`x11_persist`	As above, but plot windows remain open after PyXPlot closes.
`postscript`	Sends output to a postscript file. The filename for this file should be set using `set output`. [**default when running non-interactively; see below**]
`eps`	As above, but produces encapsulated postscript.
`pdf`	As above, but produces pdf output.
`gif`	Sends output to a gif image file; as above, the filename should be set using `set output`.
`png`	As above, but produces a png image.
`jpg`	As above, but produces a jpeg image.
`colour`	Allows datasets to be plotted in colour. Automatically they will be displayed in a series of different colours, or alternatively colours may be specified using the `with colour` plot modifier (see below). [**default**]
`color`	Equivalent to the above; provided for users of nationalities which can't spell. ☺
`monochrome`	Opposite to the above; all datasets will be plotted in black.
`portrait`	Sets plots to be displayed in upright (normal) orientation. [**default**]
`landscape`	Opposite of the above; produces side-ways plots. Not very useful when displayed on the screen, but you fit more on a sheet of paper that way around.
`invert`	Modifier for the gif, png and jpg terminals; produces output with inverted colours.[4]
`noinvert`	Modifier for the gif, png and jpg terminals; opposite to the above. [**default**]

---

[3]The authors are aware of a bug, that this terminal can occasionally go blank when a new plot is generated. This is a known bug in Ghostview, and can be worked around by selecting File → Reload within the Ghostview window.

[4]This terminal setting is useful for producing plots to embed in talk slideshows, which often contain bright text on a dark background. It only works when producing bitmapped output, though a similar effect can be achieved in postscript using the `set textcolour` and `set axescolour` commands (see Section 5.2).

`transparent`	Modifier for the gif and png terminals; produces output with a transparent background.
`solid`	Modifier for the gif and png terminals; opposite to the above. [**default**]
`antialias`	Modifier for the gif, jpg and png terminals; produces antialiased output, with colour boundaries smoothed to disguise the effects of pixelisation [**default**]
`noantialias`	Modifier for the gif, jpg and png terminals; opposite to the above
`enlarge`	Enlarge or shrink contents to fit the current paper size.
`noenlarge`	Do not enlarge output; opposite to the above. [**default**]

The default terminal is normally `x11_singlewindow`, matching approximately the behaviour of Gnuplot. However, there is an exception to this. When PyXPlot is used non-interactively – i.e. one or more command scripts are specified on the command line, and PyXPlot exits as soon as it finishes executing them – the `x11_singlewindow` is not a very sensible terminal to use: any plot window would close as soon as PyXPlot exited. The default terminal in this case changes to `postscript`.

This rule does not apply when the special '–' filename is specified in a list of command scripts on the command line, to produce an interactive terminal between running a series of scripts. In this case, PyXPlot detects that the session will be interactive, and defaults to the usual `x11_singlewindow` terminal.

An additional exception is on machines where the `DISPLAY` environment variable is not set. In this case, PyXPlot detects that it has access to no X-terminal on which to display plots, and defaults to the `postscript` terminal.

The `gif`, `png` and `jpg` terminals result in some loss of image quality, since the plot has to be sampled into a bitmapped graphic format. By default, this sampling is performed at 300 dpi, though this may be changed using the command `set dpi <value>`. Alternatively, it may be changed using the `DPI` option in the `settings` section of a configuration file (see Section 7.1).

3.5 Paper Sizes

By default, when the postscript terminal produces printable, i.e. not encapsulated, output, the paper size for this output is read from the user's system locale settings. It may be changed, however, with `set papersize` command, which may be followed either by the name of a recognised paper size, or by the dimensions of a user-defined size, specified as a `height`, `width` pair, both being measured in millimetres. For example:

```
set papersize a4
set papersize 100,100
```

A list of recognised paper size names is given in Figure 3.1.[5]

3.6   Script Watching: pyxplot_watch

PyXPlot includes a simple tool for watching command script files and executing them whenever they are modified. This may be useful when developing a command script, if one wants to make small modifications to it and see the results in a semi-live fashion. This tool is invoked by calling the `pyxplot_watch` command from a shell prompt. The command-line syntax of `pyxplot_watch` is similar to that of PyXPlot itself, for example:

```
pyxplot_watch script.ppl
```

would set `pyxplot_watch` to watch the command script file `script.ppl`. One difference, however, is that if multiple script files are specified on the command line, they are watched and executed independently, *not* sequentially, as PyXPlot itself would do. Wildcard characters can also be used to set `pyxplot_watch` to watch multiple files.[6]

This is especially useful when combined with Ghostview's watch facility. For example, suppose that a script `foo.ppl` produces postscript output `foo.ps`. The following two commands could be used to give a live view of the result of executing this script:

```
gv --watch foo.ps &
pyxplot_watch foo.ppl
```

3.7   Variables

As has already been hinted at in Section 2.3, PyXPlot recognises two types of variables: numeric variables and string variables. The former can be assigned using any valid mathematical expression. For example:

```
a = 5.2 * sqrt(64)
```

---

[5]For everything that you ever wanted to know about international paper sizes, see Marcus Kuhn's excellent treatise: `http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/~mgk25/iso-paper.html`. If you still want to know more, then Wikipedia has a good article on the Swedish extensions to this system and the Japanese B-series: `http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paper_size`.

[6]Note that `pyxplot_watch *.script` and `pyxplot_watch \*.script` will behave differently in most UNIX shells. In the first case, the wildcard is expanded by your shell, and a list of files passed to `pyxplot_watch`. Any files matching the wildcard, created after running `pyxplot_watch`, will not be picked up. In the latter case, the wildcard is expanded by `pyxplot_watch` itself, which *will* pick up any newly created files.

Name	h/mm	w/mm	Name	h/mm	w/mm
2a0	1681	1189	medium	584	457
4a0	2378	1681	monarch	267	184
a0	1189	840	post	489	394
a1	840	594	quad_demy	1143	889
a10	37	26	quarto	254	203
a2	594	420	royal	635	508
a3	420	297	statement	216	140
a4	297	210	swedish_d0	1542	1090
a5	210	148	swedish_d1	1090	771
a6	148	105	swedish_d10	48	34
a7	105	74	swedish_d2	771	545
a8	74	52	swedish_d3	545	385
a9	52	37	swedish_d4	385	272
b0	1414	999	swedish_d5	272	192
b1	999	707	swedish_d6	192	136
b10	44	31	swedish_d7	136	96
b2	707	499	swedish_d8	96	68
b3	499	353	swedish_d9	68	48
b4	353	249	swedish_e0	1241	878
b5	249	176	swedish_e1	878	620
b6	176	124	swedish_e10	38	27
b7	124	88	swedish_e2	620	439
b8	88	62	swedish_e3	439	310
b9	62	44	swedish_e4	310	219
c0	1296	917	swedish_e5	219	155
c1	917	648	swedish_e6	155	109
c10	40	28	swedish_e7	109	77
c2	648	458	swedish_e8	77	54
c3	458	324	swedish_e9	54	38
c4	324	229	swedish_f0	1476	1044
c5	229	162	swedish_f1	1044	738
c6	162	114	swedish_f10	46	32
c7	114	81	swedish_f2	738	522
c8	81	57	swedish_f3	522	369
c9	57	40	swedish_f4	369	261
crown	508	381	swedish_f5	261	184
demy	572	445	swedish_f6	184	130
double_demy	889	597	swedish_f7	130	92
elephant	711	584	swedish_f8	92	65
envelope_dl	110	220	swedish_f9	65	46
executive	267	184	swedish_g0	1354	957
foolscap	330	203	swedish_g1	957	677
government_letter	267	203	swedish_g10	42	29
international_businesscard	85	53	swedish_g2	677	478
japanese_b0	1435	1015	swedish_g3	478	338
japanese_b1	1015	717	swedish_g4	338	239
japanese_b10	44	31	swedish_g5	239	169
japanese_b2	717	507	swedish_g6	169	119
japanese_b3	507	358	swedish_g7	119	84
japanese_b4	358	253	swedish_g8	84	59
japanese_b5	253	179	swedish_g9	59	42
japanese_b6	179	126	swedish_h0	1610	1138
japanese_b7	126	89	swedish_h1	1138	805
japanese_b8	89	63	swedish_h10	50	35
japanese_b9	63	44	swedish_h2	805	569
japanese_kiku4	306	227	swedish_h3	569	402
japanese_kiku5	227	151	swedish_h4	402	284
japanese_shiroku4	379	264	swedish_h5	284	201
japanese_shiroku5	262	189	swedish_h6	201	142
japanese_shiroku6	188	127	swedish_h7	142	100
large_post	533	419	swedish_h8	100	71
ledger	432	279	swedish_h9	71	50
legal	356	216	tabloid	432	279
letter	279	216	us_businesscard	89	51

Figure 3.1: A list of all of the named paper sizes recognised by the `set papersize` command, with their heights, h, and widths, w, measured in millimetres.

would assign the value 41.6 to the variable `a`. Numerical variables can subsequently be used in mathematical expressions themselves, for example:

```
a=2*pi
plot [0:1] sin(a*x)
```

String variables can be assigned in an analogous manner, by enclosing the string in quotation marks. They can then be used wherever a quoted string could be used, for example as a filename or a plot title, as in:

```
plotname = "The Growth of a Rabbit Population"
set title plotname
```

String variables can be modified using the search-and-replace string operator[7], $=\sim$, which takes a regular expression with a syntax similar to that expected by the shell command `sed` and applies it to the relevant string.[8] For example:

```
twister="seven silver soda syphons"
twister =~ s/s/th/
print twister
```

Note that only the `s` (substitute) command of `sed` is implemented in PyXPlot. Any character can be used in place of the `/` characters in the above example, for example:

```
twister =~ s@s@th@
```

Flags can be passed, as in `sed` or `perl`, for example:

```
twister =~ s@s@th@g
```

Table 3.3 lists all of the regular expression flags recognised by the $=\sim$ operator.

Strings may also be put together using the string substitution operator, `%`, which works in a similar fashion to Python string substitution operator. This is described in detail in Section 2.3. For example, to concatenate the two strings contained in variables `a` and `b` into variable `c` one would run:

```
c = "%s%s"%(a,b)
```

One common practical application of these string operators is to label plots with the title of the data file being plotted, as in:

---

[7]Programmers with experience of `perl` will recognise this syntax.

[8]Regular expression syntax is a massive subject, and is beyond the scope of this manual. The official GNU documentation for the `sed` command is heavy reading, but there are many more accessible tutorials on the web.

g	Replace *all* matches of the pattern; by default, only the first match is replaced.
i	Perform case-insensitive matching, such that expressions like `[A-Z]` will match lowercase letters, too.
l	Make `\w`, `\W`, `\b`, `\B`, `\s` and `\S` dependent on the current locale.
m	When specified, the pattern character `^` matches the beginning of the string and the beginning of each line immediately following each newline. The pattern character `$` matches at the end of the string and the end of each line immediately preceding each newline. By default, `^` matches only the beginning of the string, and `$` only the end of the string and immediately before the newline, if present, at the end of the string.
s	Make the `.` special character match any character at all, including a newline; without this flag, `.` will match anything except a newline.
u	Make `\w`, `\W`, `\b`, `\B`, `\s` and `\S` dependent on the Unicode character properties database.
x	This flag allows the user to write regular expressions that look nicer. Whitespace within the pattern is ignored, except when in a character class or preceded by an unescaped backslash. When a line contains a `#`, neither in a character class or preceded by an unescaped backslash, all characters from the leftmost such `#` through the end of the line are ignored.

Table 3.3: A list of the flags accepted by the =∼ operator. Most are rarely used, but the **g** flag is very useful. This table is adapted from Guido van Rossum's *Python Library Reference*: `http://docs.python.org/lib/node46.html`.

```
filename="data_file.dat"
title="A plot of the data in {\tt %s}."%(filename)
title=~s/_/\_/g # Underscore is a reserved character in LaTeX
set title title
plot filename
```

3.8   The exec command

The exec command can be used to execute PyXPlot commands contained
within string variables. For example:

```
terminal="eps"
exec "set terminal %s"%(terminal)
```

It can also be used to write obfuscated PyXPlot scripts.

Chapter 4

Advanced Plotting

In this chapter, we continue to explore the various options of the `plot` command. Specifically, we turn to those aspects which differ from Gnuplot's `plot` command.

4.1 A Tour of PyXPlot's Plot Styles

We begin by reviewing the various plot styles which are available in PyXPlot. Two of these we have already met: `lines`, which draws straight lines between data points, and `points`, which does not connect data points.

4.1.1 Lines and Points

The following are PyXPlot's most basic plot styles[1]:

- `dots` – places a small dot at each datum.

- `points` – places a marker symbol at each datum.

- `lines` – connects adjacent data points with straight lines.

- `linespoints` – a combination of both lines and points.

When using the `points`, `linespoints` and `dots` plot styles, the size of the plotted points or dots can be varied by using the `pointsize` modifier, for example:

```
set samples 25
plot sin(x) with dots pointsize 10
```

which would represent data with large dots. The default value of this setting is 1.0.

---

[1]This is not an exhaustive list; see Section 8.19.2.

The width of lines can similarly be controlled with the `linewidth` modifier, and the width of the lines used to draw point symbols can be controlled with the `pointlinewidth` modifier. For example:

```
set samples 25
plot sin(x) with points pointlinewidth 2
```

In addition to setting these parameters on a per-plot basis, their default values can also be changed. The command:

```
set pointlinewidth 2
```

would set the default line width used when drawing data points. Both here, and in the `plot` command, the abbreviation `plw` is valid.

4.1.2   Upper and Lower Limit Data Points

PyXPlot can plot data points using the standard upper- and lower-limit symbols. No special syntax is required for this; these symbols are point-types[2] 12 and 13 respectively, obtained as follows:

```
plot 'upperlimits.dat' with points pointtype 12
plot 'lowerlimits.dat' with points pointtype 13
```

4.1.3   Drawing Arrows

Data may be represented as arrows connecting two points on a plot by using the `arrows` plot style. This takes four columns of data – x_1, y_1, x_2 and y_2 – and for each data point draws an arrow from the point (x_1, y_1) to the point (x_2, y_2). Three different kinds of arrows can be drawn: ones with normal arrow heads, ones with no arrow heads, which just appear as lines, and ones with arrow heads on both ends. The syntax to obtain these varieties is:

```
plot 'data.dat' with arrows_head
plot 'data.dat' with arrows_nohead
plot 'data.dat' with arrows_twohead
```

The syntax `with arrows` is a shorthand for `with arrows_head`. This plot style is analogous to the `vectors` plot style in Version 4 of Gnuplot.

---

[2]The `pointtype` modifier was introduced in Section 2.9.

4.1.4   Error Bars

In Gnuplot, when one uses errorbars, one can specify either the size of the errorbar, or the minimum to maximum range of the errorbar. Both of these usages share a common syntax, and Gnuplot's behaviour depends upon the number of columns of data provided:

```
plot 'data.dat' with yerrorbars
```

Given a data file with three columns, this takes the third column to indicate the size of the y-errorbar. Given a four-column data file, it takes the third and fourth columns to indicate the minimum to maximum range to be marked out by the errorbar.

To avoid confusion, a different syntax is adopted in PyXPlot. The syntax:

```
plot 'data.dat' with yerrorbars
```

always assumes that the third column of the data file indicates the size of the errorbar, regardless of whether a fourth is present. The syntax:

```
plot 'data.dat' with yerrorrange
```

always assumes that the third and fourth columns indicate the minimum to maximum range of the errorbar.

For clarity, a complete list of the errorbar plot styles available in PyXPlot is given below:

yerrorbars	Vertical errorbars; size drawn from the third data column.
xerrorbars	Horizontal errorbars; size drawn from the third data column.
xyerrorbars	Horizontal and vertical errorbars; sizes drawn from the third and fourth data columns respectively.
errorbars	Shorthand for `yerrorbars`.

yerrorrange	Vertical errorbars; minimum drawn from the third data column, maximum from the fourth.
xerrorrange	Horizontal errorbars; minimum drawn from the third data column, maximum from the fourth.
xyerrorrange	Horizontal and vertical errorbars; horizontal minimum drawn from the third data column and maximum from the fourth; vertical minimum drawn from the fifth and maximum from the sixth.
errorrange	Shorthand for yerrorrange.

4.1.5   Plotting Functions with Errorbars, Arrows, or More

In Gnuplot, when a function (as opposed to a data file) is plotted, only those plot styles which accept two columns of data can be used – for example, lines or points. This means that it is not possible to plot a function with errorbars. In PyXPlot, this is possible using the following syntax:

```
plot f(x):g(x) with yerrorbars
```

Two functions are supplied, separated by a colon; plotting proceeds as if a data file had been supplied, containing values of x in column 1, values of $f(x)$ in column 2, and values of $g(x)$ in column 3. This may be useful, for example, if $g(x)$ measures the intrinsic uncertainty in $f(x)$. The using modifier may also be used:

```
plot f(x):g(x) using 2:3
```

Here, $g(x)$ would be plotted on the y-axis, against $f(x)$ on the x-axis. It should be noted, however, that the range of values of x used would still correspond to the range of the plot's horizontal axis. If the above were to be attempted with an autoscaling horizontal axis, the result might be rather unexpected – PyXPlot would find itself autoscaling the x-axis range to the spread of values of $f(x)$, but find that this itself changed depending upon the range of the x-axis.[3]

4.2   Barcharts and Histograms

4.2.1   Basic Operation

As in Gnuplot, bar charts and histograms can be produced using the boxes plot style:

---

[3]We're aware that this is not good. Expect it to change in a future release.
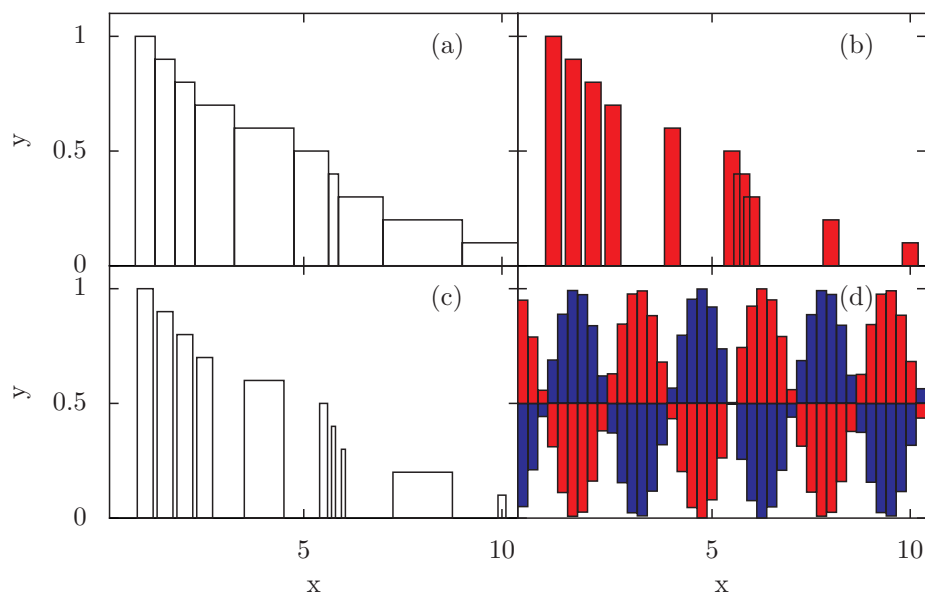
Figure 4.1: A gallery of the various bar chart styles which PyXPlot can produce. See the text for more details. The script and data file used to produce this image are available on the PyXPlot website at `http://www.pyxplot.org.uk/examples/Manual/04barchart2/`.

```
plot 'data.dat' with boxes
```

Horizontally, the interfaces between the bars are, by default, at the midpoints along the x-axis between the specified data points (see, for example, Figure 4.1a). Alternatively, the widths of the bars may be set using the `set boxwidth` command. In this case, all of the bars will be centred upon their specified x-co-ordinates, and have total widths equalling that specified in the `set boxwidth` command. Consequently, there may be gaps between them, or they may overlap, as seen in Figure 4.1(b).

Having set a fixed box width, the default behaviour of scaling box widths automatically may be restored either with the `unset boxwidth` command, or by setting the boxwidth to a negative width.

As a third alternative, it is also possible to specify different widths for each bar manually, in an additional column of the input data file. To achieve this behaviour, the `wboxes` plot style should be used:

```
plot 'data.dat' using 1:2:3 with wboxes
```

This plot style expects three columns of data to be provided: the x- and y-co-ordinates of each bar in the first two, and the width of the bars in the third. Figure 4.1(c) shows an example of this plot style in use.
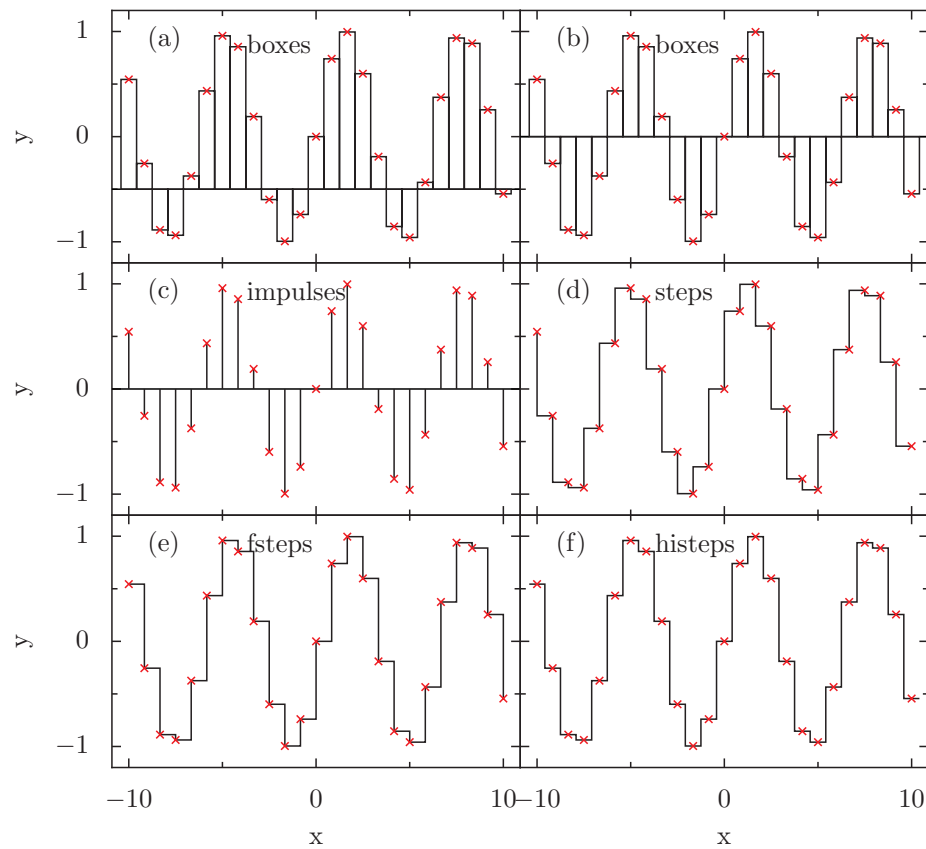
Figure 4.2: A second gallery of the various bar chart styles which PyXPlot can produce. See the text for more details. The script and data file used to produce this image are available on the PyXPlot website at `http://www.pyxplot.org.uk/examples/Manual/03barchart1/`.

By default, the bars originate from the line $y = 0$, as is normal for a histogram. However, should it be desired for the bars to start from a different vertical point, this may be achieved by using the `set boxfrom` command, for example:

```
set boxfrom 5
```

In this case, all of the bars would now originate from the line $y = 5$. Figure 4.2(1) shows the kind of effect that is achieved; for comparison, Figure 4.2(b) shows the same bar chart with the boxes starting from their default position of $y = 0$.

The bars may be filled using the `with fillcolour` modifier, followed by the name of a colour:

```
plot 'data.dat' with boxes fillcolour blue
plot 'data.dat' with boxes fc 4
```

Figures 4.1(b) and (d) demonstrate the use of filled bars.

Finally, the `impulses` plot style, as in Gnuplot, produces bars of zero width; see Figure 4.2(c) for an example.

4.2.2   Stacked Bar Charts

If several data points are supplied to the `boxes` or `wboxes` plot styles at a common x-co-ordinate, then the bars are stacked one above another into a stacked barchart. Consider the following data file:

```
1 1
2 2
2 3
3 4
```

The second bar at $x = 2$ would be placed on top of the first, spanning the range $2 < y < 5$, and having the same width as the first. If plot colours are being automatically selected from the palette, then a different palette colour is used to plot the upper bar.

4.2.3   Steps

The plot styles met so far plot data as solid bars, with left, right and top sides all drawn. Data may also be plotted with *steps*, with the left and right sides of each bar omitted. Some examples are shown in Figures 4.2(d), (e) and (f). As is illustrated in these panels, three flavours of steps are available, exactly as in Gnuplot:

```
plot 'data.dat' with steps
plot 'data.dat' with fsteps
plot 'data.dat' with histeps
```

When using the `steps` plot style, the data points specify the right-most edges of each step. When using the `fsteps` plot style, they specify the left-most edges of the steps. The `histeps` plot style works rather like the `boxes` plot style; the interfaces between the steps occur at the horizontal midpoints between the data points.

4.3   Choosing which Data to Plot

As well as the `plot` command's `index`, `using` and `every` modifiers, which allow users to plot subsets of data from data files, it also has a further

modifier, `select`. This can be used to plot only those data points in a data file which specify some given criterion. For example:

```
plot 'data.dat' select ($8>5)
plot sin(x) select (($1>0) and ($2>0))
```

In the second example, two selection criteria are given, combined with the logical `and` operator. A full list of all of the operators recognised by PyXPlot, including logical operators, was given in Chapter 2; see Table 2.3. The select modifier has many applications, for example, plotting two-dimensional slices of three-dimensional datasets and plotting subsets of data from files.

When plotting using the `lines` style, the default behaviour is for the lines plotted not to be broken if a set of datapoints are removed by the select modifier. However, this behaviour is sometimes undesirable. To cause the plotted line to break when points are removed the `discontinuous` modifier is supplied. For example:

```
plot sin(x) select ($1>0) discontinuous
```

plots a set of disconnected peaks from the sine function.

4.4   Horizontally arranged Data files

The command syntax for plotting columns of data files against one another was previously described in Section 2.6. In an extension of what is possible in Gnuplot, PyXPlot also allows one to plot *rows* of data against one another in horizontally-arranged data files. For this, the keyword `rows` is placed after the `using` modifier:

```
plot 'data.dat' index 1 using rows 1:2
```

For completeness, the syntax `using columns` is also accepted, to specify the default behaviour of plotting columns against one another:

```
plot 'data.dat' index 1 using columns 1:2
```

When plotting horizontally-arranged data files, the meanings of the `index` and `every` modifiers (see Section 2.6) are altered slightly. The former continues to refer to vertically-displaced blocks of data separated by two blank lines. Blocks, as referenced in the `every` modifier, likewise continue to refer to vertically-displaced blocks of data points, separated by single blank lines. The row numbers passed to the `using` modifier are counted from the top of the current block.

However, the line-numbers specified in the `every` modifier – i.e. variables a, c and e in the system introduced in Section 2.6 – now refer to horizontal columns, rather than lines. For example:

```
plot 'data.dat' using rows 1:2 every 2::3::9
```

would plot the data in row 2 against that in row 1, using only the values in every other column, between columns 3 and 9.

4.5 Configuring Axes

By default, plots have only one x-axis and one y-axis. Further parallel axes can be added and configured via statements such as:

```
set x3label 'foo'
plot sin(x) axes x3y1
set axis x3
```

In the top statement, a further horizontal axis, called the $x3$-axis, is implicitly created by giving it a label. In the next, the `axes` modifier is used to tell the `plot` command to plot data using the horizontal $x3$-axis and the vertical y-axis. Here again, the axis would be implicitly created if it didn't already exist. In the third statement, an $x3$-axis is explicitly created.

Unlike Gnuplot, which allows only a maximum of two parallel axes to be attached to any given plot, PyXPlot allows an unlimited number of axes to be used. Odd-numbered x-axes appear below the plot, and even numbered x-axes above it; a similar rule applies for y-axes, to the left and to the right. This is illustrated in Figure 4.3.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the ranges of axes can be set either using the `set xrange` command, or within the `plot` command. The following two statements would set equivalent ranges for the $x3$-axis:

```
set x3range [-2:2]
plot [:][:][:][:][-2:2] sin(x) axes x3y1
```

As usual, the first two ranges specified in the `plot` command apply to the x- and y-axes. The next pair apply to the $x2$- and $y2$-axes, and so forth.

Having made axes with the above commands, they may subsequently be removed using the `unset axis` command as follows:

```
unset axis x3
unset axis x3x5y3 y7
```

The top statement, for example, would remove axis $x3$. The command `unset axis` on its own, with no axes specified, returns all axes to their default configuration. The special case of `unset axis x1` does not remove the first x-axis – it cannot be removed – but instead returns it to its default configuration.

It should be noted that if the following two commands are typed in succession, the second may not entirely negate the first:
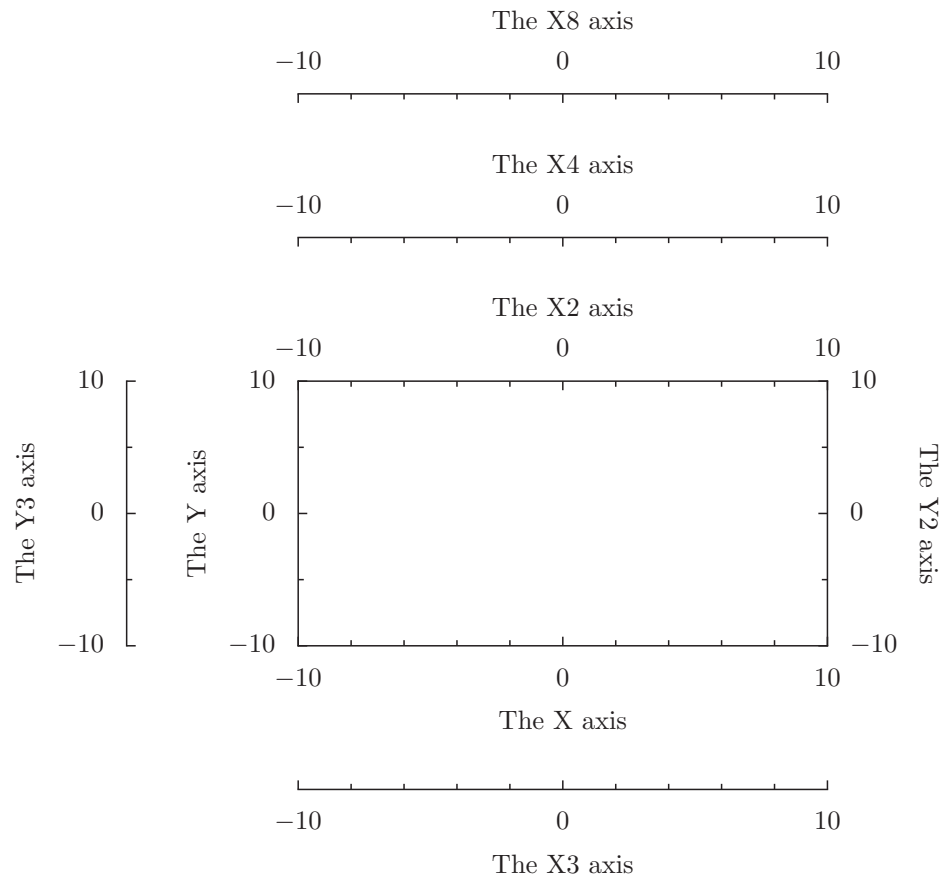
Figure 4.3: A plot demonstrating the use of large numbers of axes. Odd-numbered x-axes appear below the plot, and even numbered x-axes above it; a similar rule applies for y-axes, to the left and to the right.

```
set x3label 'foo'
unset x3label 'foo'
```

If an $x3$-axis did not previously exist, then the first will have implicitly created one. This would need to be removed with the `unset axis x3` command if it was not desired.

A subtly different task is that of removing labels from axes, or setting axes not to display. To achieve this, a number of special axis labels are used. Labelling an axis `nolabels` has the effect that no title or numerical labels are placed upon it. Labelling it `nolabelstics` is stronger still; this removes all tick marks from it as well (similar in effect to the `set noxtics` command; see below). Finally, labelling it `invisible` makes an axis completely invisible.

Labels may be placed on such axes, by suffixing the magic keywords above with a colon and the desired title. For example:

```
set xlabel 'nolabels:Time'
```

would produce an x-axis with no numeric labels, but a label of 'Time'.

In the unlikely event of wanting to label a normal axis with one of these magic words, this may be achieved by prefixing the magic word with a space. There is one further magic axis label, `linkaxis`, which will be described in Section 5.3.3.

The ticks of axes can be configured to point either inward, towards the plot, as is the default, or outward towards the axis labels, or in both directions. This is achieved using the `set xticdir` command, for example:

```
set xticdir inward
set y2ticdir outward
set x2ticdir both
```

The position of ticks along each axis can be configured with the `set xtics` command. The appearance of ticks along any axis can be turned off with the `set noxtics` command. The syntax for these is given below:

```
set xtics { axis | border | inward | outward | both }
         {  autofreq
          | <increment>
          | <minimum>, <increment> { , <maximum> }
          | (     {"label"} <position>
             { , {"label"} <position> } .... )
         }
set noxtics
show xtics
```

The keywords `inward`, `outward` and `both` alter the directions of the ticks, and have the same effect as in the `set xticdir` command. The keyword `axis` is an alias for `inward`, and `border` an alias for `outward`; both are provided for compatibility with Gnuplot. If the keyword `autofreq` is given, the automatic placement of ticks along the axis is restored.

If `<minimum>`, `<increment>`, `<maximum>` are specified, then ticks are placed at evenly spaced intervals between the specified limits. In the case of logarithmic axes, `<increment>` is applied multiplicatively.

Alternatively, the final form allows ticks to be placed on an axis individually, and each given its own textual label.

The following example sets the $x1$-axis to have tick marks at $x = 0.05$, 0.1, 0.2 and 0.4. The $x2$-axis has symbolically labelled tics at $x = 1/\pi, 2/\pi$, etc., pointing outwards from the plot. The left-hand y-axis has tick marks placed automatically whereas the $y2$-axis has no tics at all. The overall effect is shown in Figure 4.4.

```
set log x1x2
set grid x2
set xtics 0.05, 2, 0.4
set x2tics border \
    ("$\frac{1}{\pi}$" 1/pi,      "$\frac{1}{2\pi}$" 1/(2*pi), \
     "$\frac{1}{3\pi}$" 1/(3*pi), "$\frac{1}{4\pi}$" 1/(4*pi), \
     "$\frac{1}{5\pi}$" 1/(5*pi), "$\frac{1}{6\pi}$" 1/(6*pi))
set ytics autofreq
set noy2tics
```

Minor tick marks can be placed on axes with the `set mxtics` command, which has the same syntax as above.

4.6   Keys and Legends

By default, plots are displayed with legends in their top-right corners. The textual description of each dataset is drawn by default from the command used to plot it. Alternatively, the user may specify his own description for each dataset by following the `plot` command with the `title` modifier, as follows:

```
plot sin(x) title 'A sine wave'
plot cos(x) title ''
```

In the lower case, a blank title is specified, in which case PyXPlot makes no entry for the dataset in the legend. This is useful if it is desired to place some but not all datasets into the legend of a plot. Alternatively, the production of the legend can be completely turned off for all datasets using
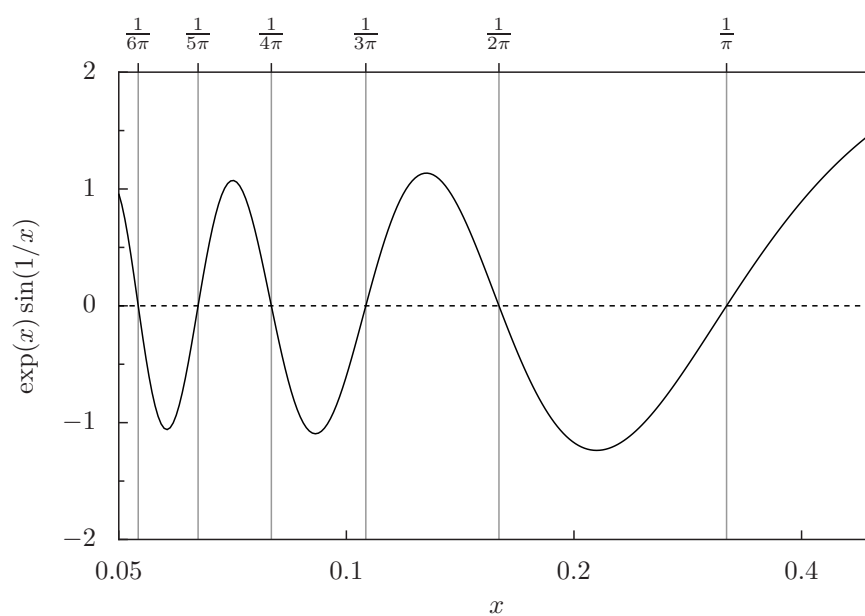
Figure 4.4: A plot illustrating some of the crossing points of the function $\exp(x)\sin(1/x)$. The commands used to set up ticking on the axes in this plot are as given in the text.

the command `set nokey`. The opposite effect can be achieved by the `set key` command.

The `set key` command command can also be used to dictate where on the plot the legend should be placed, using a syntax along the lines of:

```
set key top right
```

The following recognised positioning keywords are self-explanatory: `top`, `bottom`, `left`, `right`, `xcentre` and `ycentre`. The word `outside` places the key outside the plot, on its right side. The words `below` and `above` place legends below and above the plot respectively.

In addition, two positional offset co-ordinates may be specified after such keywords – the first value is assumed to be an x-offset, and the second a y-offset, both in units of centimetres. For example:

```
set key bottom left 0.0 -2
```

would display a key below the bottom left corner of the graph.

By default, entries in the key are placed in a single vertical list. They can instead be arranged into a number of columns by means of the `set keycolumns` command. This should be followed by the integer number of desired columns, for example:

```
set keycolumns 2
```

An example of a plot with a two-column legend is given in Figure 4.5.

4.7   The `linestyle` Keyword

At times, the string of style keywords placed after the `with` modifier in `plot` commands can grow rather unwieldy in its length. For clarity, frequently used plot styles can be stored as *linestyles*; despite the name, this is true of styles involving points as well as lines. The syntax for setting a linestyle is:

```
set linestyle 2 points pointtype 3
```

where the `2` is the identification number of the linestyle. In a subsequent `plot` statement, this linestyle can be recalled as follows:

```
plot sin(x) with linestyle 2
```
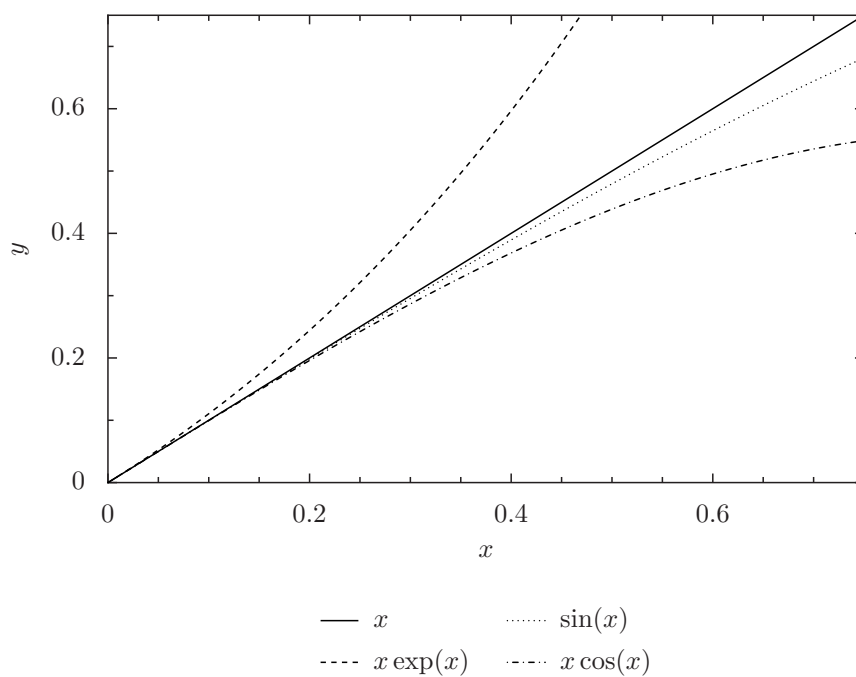
Figure 4.5: This plot shows how rapidly three functions, often approximated as x, deviate from that approximation. Furthermore it is an example of a plot with a two-column legend, positioned below the plot using set key below. The complete script used to produce the plot can be found on the PyXPlot website at http://www.pyxplot.org.uk/examples/Manual/07legends/.

4.8   Colour Plotting

In the `with` clause of the plot command, the modifier `colour`, which can be
abbreviated to '`c`', can be used to manually select the colour in which each
dataset is to be plotted. It should be followed either by an integer, to set a
colour from the present palette, or by a colour name. A list of valid colour
names is given in Section 7.6. For example:

```
plot sin(x) with c 5
plot sin(x) with colour blue
```

The `colour` modifier can also be used when defining linestyles.

PyXPlot has a palette of colours which it assigns sequentially to datasets
when colours are not manually assigned. This is also the palette to which
integers passed to `set colour` refer – the `5` above, for example. It may be
set using the `set palette` command, which differs in syntax from Gnuplot.
It should be followed by a comma-separated list of colours, for example:

```
set palette BrickRed, LimeGreen, CadetBlue
```

Another way of setting the palette, in a configuration file, is described in
Section 7.2; a list of valid colour names is given in Section 7.6.

4.9   Plotting Many Files at Once

PyXPlot allows the wildcards `*` and `?` to be used in the filenames of data
files supplied to the `plot` command. For example, the following would plot
all data files in the current directory with a `.dat` suffix, using the same plot
options:

```
plot '*.dat' with linewidth 2
```

In the legend, full filenames are displayed, allowing the data files to be
distinguished. As in Gnuplot, a blank filename passed to the plot command
causes the last used data file to be used again, for example:

```
plot 'data.dat' using 1:2, '' using 2:3
```

or even:

```
plot '*.dat' using 1:2, '' using 2:3
```

The `*` and `?` wildcards can be used in a similar fashion in the `load`
command.

4.10 Backing Up Over-Written Files

By default, when graphical output is sent to a file – i.e. a postscript file or
a bitmap image – pre-existing files are overwritten if their filenames match
that of the file which PyXPlot generates. This behaviour may be changed
with the `set backup` command, which has the syntax:

```
set backup
set nobackup
```

When this switch is turned on, pre-existing files will be renamed with a
tilde appended to their filenames, rather than being overwritten.

Chapter 5

Labelling Plots and Producing Galleries

So far, we have talked exclusively about how to plot graphs with PyXPlot. In this chapter, we discuss how to label graphs and place simple vector graphics around them.

5.1 Adding Arrows and Text Labels to Plots

This section describes how to put arrows and text labels on plots; the syntax is similar, though not identical, to that used by Gnuplot. PyXPlot extends Gnuplot's syntax to make it possible to to set the colours and styles of arrows and text labels.

5.1.1 Arrows

Arrows may be placed on plots using the `set arrow` command. A simple example would be:

```
set arrow 1 from 0,0 to 1,1
```

The number `1` immediately following `set arrow` specifies an identification number for the arrow, allowing it to be subsequently removed via the command:

```
unset arrow 1
```

or equivalently, via:

```
set noarrow 1
```

The `set arrow` command can be followed by the keyword `with` to specify the style of the arrow. For example, the keywords `nohead`, `head` and `twohead`, placed after the keyword `with`, can be used to generate arrows with no arrow heads, normal arrow heads, or two arrow heads. `twoway` is an alias for `twohead`. For example:

```
set arrow 1 from 0,0 to 1,1 with nohead
```

Line types and colours can also be specified after the keyword `with`:

```
set arrow 1 from 0,0 to 1,1 with nohead \
linetype 1 c blue
```

As in Gnuplot, the co-ordinates for the start and end points of the arrow can be specified in a range of co-ordinate systems. The co-ordinate system to be used should be specified immediately before the co-ordinate value. The default system, `first` measures the graph using the x- and y-axes. The `second` system uses the $x2$- and $y2$-axes. The `screen` and `graph` systems both measure in centimetres from the origin of the graph. In the following example, we use these specifiers, and specify co-ordinates using variables rather than doing so explicitly:

```
x0 = 0.0
y0 = 0.0
x1 = 1.0
y1 = 1.0
set arrow 1 from first  x0, first  y0 \
            to   screen x1, screen y1 \
            with nohead
```

In addition to these four options, which are those available in Gnuplot, the syntax '`axis`n' may also be used, to use the nth x- or y-axis – for example, '`axis3`'. This allows arrows to reference any arbitrary axis on plots which make use of large numbers of parallel axes (see Section 4.5).

5.1.2   Text Labels

Text labels may be placed on plots using the `set label` command. As with all textual labels in PyXPlot, these are rendered in LaTeX:

```
set label 1 'Hello World' at 0,0
```

As in the previous section, the number `1` is a reference number, which allows the label to be removed by either of the following two commands:

```
set nolabel 1
unset label 1
```

The positional co-ordinates for the text label, placed after the `at` keyword, can be specified in any of the co-ordinate systems described for arrows above. A rotation angle may optionally be specified after the keyword `rotate`, to rotate text counter-clockwise by a given angle, measured in degrees. For example, the following would produce upward-running text:

```
set label 1 'Hello World' at axis3 3.0, axis4 2.7 rotate 90
```

A colour can also be specified, if desired, using the `with colour` modifier. For example, the following would produce a green label at the origin:

```
set label 2 'This label is green' at 0, 0 with colour green
```

The fontsize of these text labels can be set globally using the `set fontsize` command. This applies not only to the `set label` command, but also to plot titles, axis labels, keys, etc. The value given should be an integer in the range $-4 \leq x \leq 5$. The default is zero, which corresponds to LaTeX's `normalsize`; -4 corresponds to `tiny` and 5 to `Huge`.

The `set textcolour` command can be used to globally set the colour of all text output, and applies to all of the text that the `set fontsize` command does. It is especially useful when producing plots to be embedded in presentation slideshows, where bright text on a dark background may be desired. It should be followed either by an integer, to set a colour from the present palette, or by a colour name. A list of the recognised colour names can be found in Section 7.6. For example:

```
set textcolour 2
set textcolour blue
```

By default, each label's specified position corresponds to its bottom left corner. This alignment may be changed with the `set texthalign` and `set textvalign` commands. The former takes the options `left`, `centre` or `right`, and the latter takes the options `bottom`, `centre` or `top`, for example:

```
set texthalign right
set textvalign top
```

An example of a somewhat unconventional plot containing many labels and lines can be found in Figure 5.1.
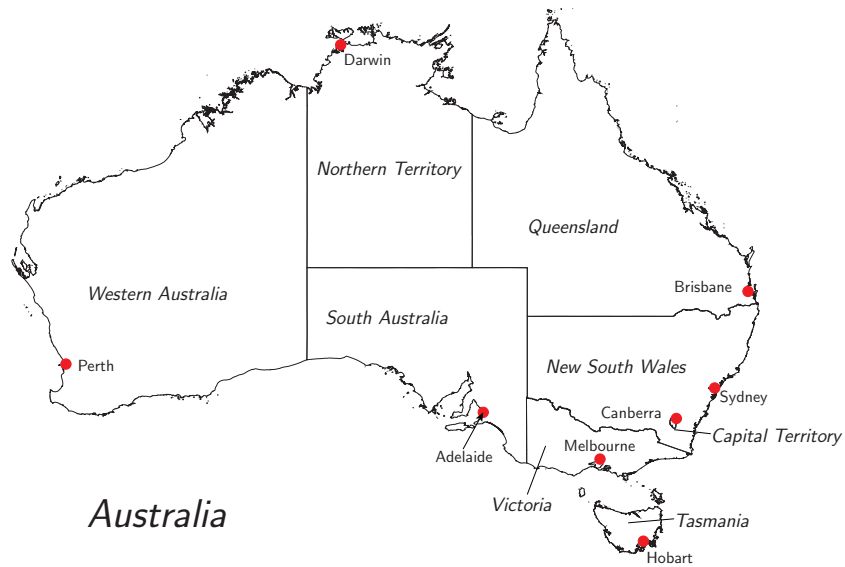
Figure 5.1: A map of Australia, plotted using PyXPlot. The data were obtained from `http://www.maproom.psu.edu/dcw/` (for the coastal outlines and state boundaries) and `http://en.wikipedia.org` (for the city locations). The data files and script used to produce this map can be downloaded from the PyXPlot website at `http://www.pyxplot.org.uk/examples/Manual/08map/`.

5.2 Gridlines

Gridlines may be placed on a plot and subsequently removed via the statements:

```
set grid
set nogrid
```

respectively. The following commands are also valid:

```
unset grid
unset nogrid
```

By default, gridlines are drawn from the major and minor ticks of the default x- and y-axes (which are the first x- and y-axes unless set otherwise in the configuration file; see Chapter 7.1). However, the axes which should be used may be specified after the `set grid` command:

```
set grid x2y2
set grid x x2y2
```

The top example would connect the gridlines to the ticks of the $x2$- and $y2$-axes, whilst the lower would draw gridlines from both the x- and the $x2$-axes.

If one of the specified axes does not exist, then no gridlines will be drawn in that direction. Gridlines can subsequently be removed selectively from some axes via:

```
unset grid x2x3
```

The colours of gridlines can be controlled via the `set gridmajcolour` and `set gridmincolour` commands, which control the gridlines emanating from major and minor axis ticks respectively. An example would be:

```
set gridmincolour blue
```

Any of the colour names listed in Section 7.6 can be used.

A related command is `set axescolour`, which has a syntax similar to that above, and sets the colour of the graph's axes.

5.3 Multi-plotting

Gnuplot has a plotting mode called *multiplot* which allows many graphs to be plotted together and displayed side-by-side. The basic syntax of this mode is reproduced in PyXPlot, but it is hugely extended.

The mode is entered by the command `set multiplot`. This can be compared to taking a blank sheet of paper on which to place plots. Plots are then placed on that sheet of paper, as usual, with the `plot` command. The position of each plot is set using the `set origin` command, which takes a comma-separated (x, y) co-ordinate pair, measured in centimetres. The following, for example, would plot a graph of $\sin(x)$ to the left of a plot of $\cos(x)$:

```
set multiplot
plot sin(x)
set origin 10,0
plot cos(x)
```

The multiplot page may subsequently be cleared with the `clear` command, and multiplot mode may be left using the `set nomultiplot` command.

5.3.1   Deleting, Moving and Changing Plots

Each time a plot is placed on the multiplot page in PyXPlot, it is allocated a reference number, which is output to the terminal. Reference numbers count up from zero each time the multiplot page is cleared. A number of commands exist for modifying plots after they have been placed on the page, selecting them by making reference to their reference numbers.

Plots may be removed from the page with the `delete` command, and restored with the `undelete` command:

```
delete <number>
undelete <number>
```

The reference numbers of deleted plots are not reused until the page is cleared, as they may always be restored with the `undelete` command; plots which have been deleted simply do not appear.

Plots may also be moved with the `move` command. For example, the following would move plot 23 to position $(8, 8)$ measured in centimetres:

```
move 23 to 8,8
```

In multiplot mode, the `replot` command can be used to modify the last plot added to the page. For example, the following would change the title of the latest plot to 'foo', and add a plot of $\cos(x)$ to it:

```
set title 'foo'
replot cos(x)
```

Additionally, it is possible to modify any plot on the page, by first selecting it with the `edit` command. Subsequently, the `replot` command will act upon the selected plot. The following example would produce two plots, and then change the colour of the text on the first:

```
set multiplot
plot sin(x)
set origin 10,0
plot cos(x)
edit 0        # Select the first plot ...
set textcolour red
replot        # ... and replot it.
```

The `edit` command can also be used to view the settings which are applied to any plot on the multiplot page – after executing `edit 0`, the `show` command will show the settings applied to plot zero.

When a new plot is added to the page, the `replot` command always switches to act upon this most recent plot.

5.3.2   Listing Items on a Multiplot

A listing of all of the items on a multiplot, giving their reference numbers and the commands used to produce them, can be obtained using the `list` command. For example:

```
pyxplot> list
#  ID | Command
    0   plot f(x)
d   1   text 'Figure 1: A plot of f(x)'
    2   text 'Figure 1: A plot of $f(x)$'

# Items marked 'd' are deleted
```

In this example, the user has plotted a graph of $f(x)$, and added a caption to it. The `ID` column lists the reference numbers of each multiplot item. Item `1` has been deleted, and this is indicated by the `d` to the left of its reference number.

5.3.3   Linked Axes

The axes of plots can be linked together, in such a way that they always share a common scale. This can be useful when placing plots next to one another, firstly, of course, if it is of intrinsic interest to ensure that they are on a common scale, but also because the two plots then do not both need their own axis labels, and space can be saved by one sharing the labels

from the other. In PyXPlot, an axis which borrows its scale and labels from another is called a *linked axis*.

Such axes are declared by setting the label of the linked axis to a magic string such as `linkaxis 0`. This magic label would set the axis to borrow its scale from an axis from plot zero. The general syntax is '`linkaxis` n m', where n and m are two integers, separated by a comma or whitespace. The first, n, indicates the plot from which to borrow an axis; the second, m, indicates whether to borrow the scale of axis $x1$, $x2$, $x3$, etc. By default, $m = 1$. The linking will fail, and a warning result, if an attempt is made to link to an axis which doesn't exist.

5.3.4   Text Labels, Arrows and Images

In addition to placing plots on the multiplot page, text labels may also be inserted independently of any plots, using the `text` command. This has the following syntax:

```
text 'This is some text' at x,y
```

In this case, the string 'This is some text' would be rendered at position (x, y) on the multiplot. As with the `set label` command, a colour may optionally be specified with the `with colour` modifier, as well as a rotation angle to rotate text labels through any given angle, measured in degrees counter-clockwise. For example:

```
text 'This is some text' at x,y rotate r with colour red
```

The commands `set textcolour`, `set texthalign` and `set textvalign`, which have already been described in the context in the `set label` command, can also be used to set the colour and alignment of text produced with the `text` command. A useful application of this is to produce centred headings at the top of multiplots.

As with plots, each text item has a unique identification number, and can be moved around, deleted or undeleted with the `move`, `delete` and `undelete` commands.

It should be noted that the `text` command can also be used outside of the multiplot environment, to render a single piece of short text instead of a graph. One obvious application is to produce equations rendered as graphical files for inclusion in talks.

Arrows may also be placed on multiplot pages, independently of any plots, using the `arrow` command, which has syntax:

```
arrow from x,y to x,y
```

As above, arrows receive unique identification numbers, and can be deleted and undeleted.

The `arrow` command may be followed by the `with` keyword to specify to style of the arrow. The style keywords which are accepted are identical to those accepted by the `set arrow` command (see Section 5.1.1). For example:

```
arrow from x1,y1 to x2,y2 \
with twohead colour red
```

Bitmap images in jpeg format may be placed on the multiplot using the `jpeg` command. This has syntax:

```
jpeg 'filename' at x,y width w
```

As an alternative to the `width` keyword the height of the image can be specified, using the analogous `height` keyword. An optional angle can also be specified using the `rotate` keyword; this causes the included image to be rotated counter-clockwise by a specified angle, measured in degrees.

Vector graphic images in eps format may be placed on to a multiplot using the `eps` command, which has a syntax analogous to the `jpeg` command. However neither height nor width need be specified; in this case the image will be included at its native size. For example:

```
eps 'filename' at 3,2 rotate 5
```

will place the eps file with its bottom-left corner at position $(3, 2)$ cm from the origin, rotated counter-clockwise through 5 degrees.

5.3.5 Speed Issues

By default, whenever an item is added to a multiplot, or an existing item moved or replotted, the whole multiplot is replotted to show the change. This can be a time consuming process on large and complex multiplots. For this reason, the `set nodisplay` command is provided, which stops PyXPlot from producing any output. The `set display` command can subsequently be issued to return to normal behaviour.

This can be especially useful in scripts which produce large multiplots. There is no point in producing output at each step in the construction of a large multiplot, and a great speed increase can be achieved by wrapping the script with:

```
set nodisplay
[...prepare large multiplot...]
set display
refresh
```

5.3.6   The `refresh` command

The `refresh` command is rather similar to the `replot` command, but produces an exact copy of the latest display. This can be useful, for example, after changing the terminal type, to produce a second copy of a multiplot page in a different format. But the crucial difference between this command and `replot` is that it doesn't replot anything. Indeed, there could be only textual items and arrows on the present multiplot page, and no graphs *to* replot.

5.4   LaTeX and PyXPlot

The `text` command can straightforwardly be used to render simple one-line LaTeX strings, but sometimes the need arises to place more substantial blocks of text onto a plot. For this purpose, it can be useful to use the LaTeX `parbox` or `minipage` environments[1] For example:

```
text '\parbox[t]{6cm}{\setlength{\parindent}{1cm} \
\noindent There once was a lady from Hyde, \\ \
Who ate a green apple and died, \\ \
\indent While her lover lamented, \\ \
\indent The apple fermented, \\ \
and made cider inside her inside.}'
```

If unusual mathematical symbols are required, for example those in the `amsmath` package, such a package can be loaded using the `set preamble` command. For example:

```
set preamble \usepackage{marvosym}
text "{\Huge\Dontwash\ \NoIroning\ \NoTumbler}$\;$ Do not \
wash, iron or tumble-dry this plot."
```

---

[1]Remember, any valid LaTeX string can be passed to the `text` command and `set label` command.

Chapter 6

Numerical Analysis

In this chapter, we outline the facilities provided for simple numerical analysis and data processing within PyXPlot.

6.1 Function Splicing

In PyXPlot, as in Gnuplot, user-defined functions may be declared on the command line:

```
f(x) = x*sin(x)
```

It is also possible to declare functions which are valid only over certain ranges of argument space. For example, the following function would only be valid within the range $-2 < x < 2$:[1]

```
f(x)[-2:2] = x*sin(x)
```

The following function would only be valid when all of a, b, c were in the range $-1 \rightarrow 1$:

```
f(a,b,c)[-1:1][-1:1][-1:1] = a+b+c
```

If an attempt is made to evaluate a function outside of its specified range, then an error results. This may be useful, for example, for plotting a function only within some specified range. The following would plot the function $\text{sinc}(x)$, but only in the range $-2 < x < 7$:

```
f(x)[-2:7] = sin(x)/x
plot f(x)
```

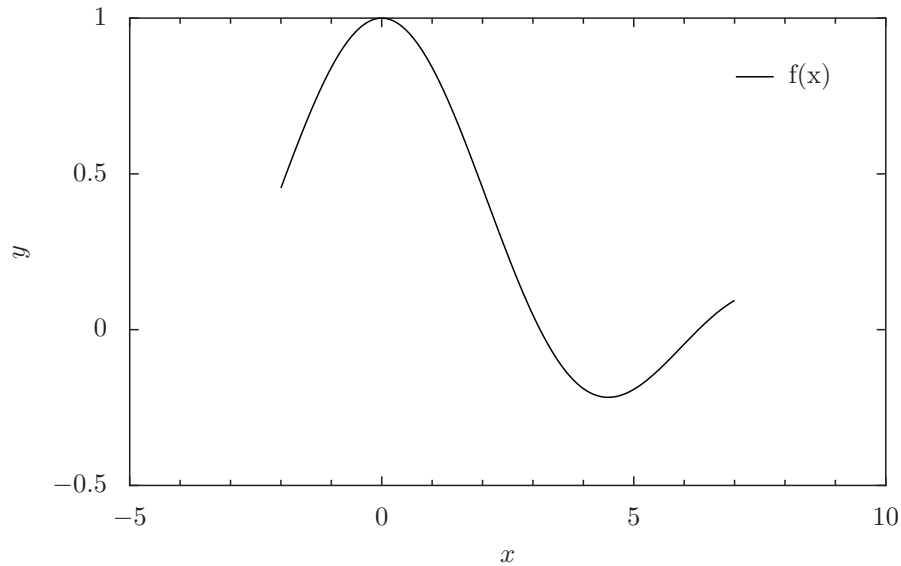[1]The syntax `[-2:2]` can also be written `[-2 to 2]`.

Figure 6.1: A simple example of the use of function splicing to truncate the function $\text{sinc}(x)$ at $x = -2$ and $x = 7$. See details in the text.

The output of this particular example can be seen in Figure 6.1. A similar effect could also have been achieved with the `select` keyword; see Section 4.3.

It is possible to make multiple declarations of the same function, over different regions of argument space; if there is an overlap in the valid argument space for multiple definitions, then later declarations take precedence. This makes it possible to use different functional forms for functions in different parts of parameter space, and is especially useful when fitting functions to data, if different functional forms are to be spliced together to fit different regimes in the data.

Another application of function splicing is to work with functions which do not have analytic forms, or which are, by definition, discontinuous, such as top-hat functions or Heaviside functions. The following example would define $f(x)$ to be a Heaviside function:

```
f(x) = 0
f(x)[0:] = 1
```

The following example would define $f(x)$ to follow the Fibonacci sequence, though it is not at all computationally efficient, and it is inadvisable to evaluate it for $x \gtrsim 8$:

```
f(x) = 1
f(x)[2:] = f(x-1) + f(x-2)
plot [0:8] f(x)
```
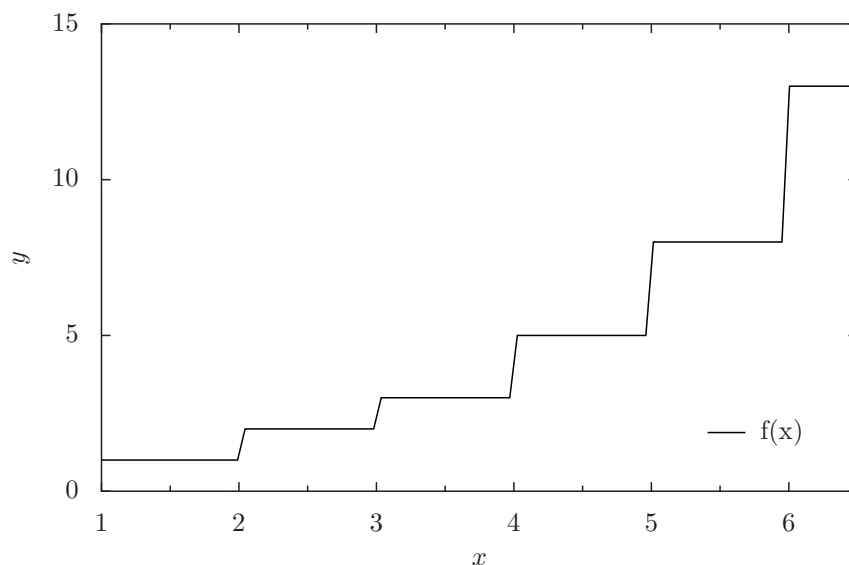
Figure 6.2: An example of the use of function splicing to define a function which does not have an analytic form – in this case, the Fibonacci sequence. See the text for details.

The output of this example can be seen in Figure 6.2

6.2 Datafile Interpolation: Spline Fitting

Gnuplot allows data to be interpolated using its `csplines` plot style, for example:

```
plot 'data.dat' with csplines
plot 'data.dat' with acsplines
```

where the upper statement fits a spline through all of the datapoints, and the lower applies some smoothing to the data first. This syntax also is supported in PyXPlot, though splines may also be fit through data using a new, more powerful, `spline` command. This has a syntax similar to that of the `fit` command, for example:

```
spline f() 'data.dat' index 1 using 2:3
```

In this example, the function $f(x)$ now becomes a special function, representing a spline fit to the given datafile. It can be plotted or otherwise used in exactly the same way as any other function. This approach is more flexible than Gnuplot's syntax, as the spline $f(x)$ can subsequently be spliced together with other functions (see the previous section), or used in any

mathematical operation. The following code snippet, for example, would fit splines through two datasets, and then plot the interpolated differences between them, regardless, for example, of whether the two datasets were sampled at exactly the same x co-ordinates:

```
spline f() 'data1.dat'
spline g() 'data2.dat'
plot f(x)-g(x)
```

Smoothed splines can also be produced:

```
spline f() 'data1.dat' smooth 1.0
```

where the value 1.0 determines the degree of smoothing to apply; the higher the value, the more smoothing is applied. The default behaviour is not to smooth at all – equivalent to `smooth 0.0` – and a value of 1.0 corresponds to the default amount of smoothing applied in Gnuplot's `acsplines` plot style.

6.3   Tabulating Functions and Slicing Data Files

PyXPlot's `tabulate` command can be used to produce a text file containing the values of a function at a set of points. For example, the following would produce a data file called `sine.dat` containing a list of values of the sine function:

```
set output 'sine.dat'
tabulate [-pi:pi] sin(x)
```

Multiple functions may be tabulated into the same file, either by using the `using` modifier:

```
tabulate [0:2*pi] sin(x):cos(x):tan(x) u 1:2:3:4
```

or by placing them in a comma-separated list, as in the `plot` command:

```
tabulate [0:2*pi] sin(x), cos(x), tan(x)
```

The `samples` setting can be used to control the number of points that are inserted into the data file:

```
set samples 200
```

If the x-axis is set to be logarithmic then the points at which the functions are evaluated are spaced logarithmically.

The `tabulate` command can also be used to select portions of data files for output into a new file. For example, the following would write out the third, sixth and ninth columns of the datafile `input.dat`, but only when the arcsine of the value in the fourth column is positive:

```
set output 'filtered.dat'
tabulate 'input.dat' u 3:6:9 select (asin($4)>0)
```

The `select`, `using` and `every` modifiers operate in the same manner as with the `plot` command.

The format used in each column of the output file is chosen automatically with integers and small numbers treated intelligently to produce output which preserves accuracy, but is also easily human-readable. If desired, however, a format statement may be specified using the `with format` specifier. The syntax for this is similar to that expected by the Python string substitution operator (`%`)[2]. For example, to tabulate the values of x^2 to very many significant figures one could use:

```
tabulate x**2 with format "%27.20e"
```

If there are not enough columns present in the supplied format statement it will be repeated in a cyclic fashion; e.g. in the example above the single supplied format is used for both columns.

6.4 Numerical Integration and Differentiation

Special functions are available for performing numerical integration and differentiation of expressions: `int_dx()` and `diff_dx()`. In each case, the 'x' may be replaced with any valid one-letter variable name, to integrate or differentiate with respect to that dummy variable.

The function `int_dx()` takes three parameters – firstly the expression to be integrated, which should be placed in quotes as a string, followed by the minimum and maximum integration limits. For example, the following would plot the integral of the function $\sin(x)$:

```
plot int_dt('sin(t)',0,x)
```

The function `diff_dx()` takes two obligatory parameters plus two further optional parameters. The first is the expression to be differentiated, which, as above, should be placed in quotes as a string, followed by the point at which the differential should be evaluated, followed by optional parameters ϵ_1 and ϵ_2 which are described below. The following example would evaluate the differential of the function $\cos(x)$ with respect to x at $x = 1.0$:

---

[2]Note that this operator can also be used within PyXPlot; see Section 2.3 for details.

```
print diff_dx('cos(x)', 1.0)
```

Differentials are evaluated by a simple differencing algorithm, and a parameter ϵ controls the spacing with which to perform the differencing operation:

$$\left.\frac{\mathrm{d}f}{\mathrm{d}x}\right|_{x=x_0} \approx \frac{f(x_0 + \epsilon/2) - f(x_0 - \epsilon/2)}{\epsilon}$$

where $\epsilon = \epsilon_1 + x\epsilon_2$. By default, $\epsilon_1 = \epsilon_2 = 10^{-6}$, which is appropriate for the differentiation of most well-behaved functions.

Advanced users may be interested to know that integration is performed using the `quad` function of the `integrate` package of the `scipy` numerical toolkit for Python – a general purpose integration routine.

6.5   Histograms

The `histogram` command takes data from a file and bins it, producing a function that represents the frequency distribution of the supplied data. A histogram is defined as a function consisting of discrete intervals, the area under each of which is equal to the number of points binned in that interval. For example:

```
histogram f() 'input.dat'
```

would bin the points in the first column of the file `input.dat` into bins of unit width and produce a function $f()$, the value of which at any given point was equal to the number of items in the bin at that point.

Modifiers can be supplied to the `histogram` command command to control the bins that it uses. The `binwidth` modifier sets the width of the bins used and the `binorigin` modifier their origin. For example:

```
histogram wabbitcount() 'rabits.dat' binorigin 0.5 binwidth 2
```

bins the rabbit data into bins between 0.5 and 2.5, 2.5 and 4.5, etc. Alternatively the `bins` modifier allows an arbitrary set of bins to be specified. For example the command:

```
histogram g() 'input.dat' bins (1, 2, 4)
```

would bin the points in the first column of the file `input.dat` into two bins, $x = 1 \to 2$ and $x = 2 \to 4$.

A range can be supplied immediately following the command, using the same syntax as in the `plot` and `fit` commands; only points that fall in that range will then be binned. In the same way as for the `plot` command, the

`index`, `every`, `using` and `select` modifiers can also be used to bin different portions of a datafile.

Note that, although a histogram is similar to a bar chart, they are subtly different. A bar chart has the *height* of the bar equal to the number of points that it represents; for a histogram the *area* of the bar is equal to the number of points. To produce a bar chart use the histogram command and then multiply by the bin width when plotting.

If the function produced by the histogram command is plotted using the `boxes` plot style, box boundaries will be drawn to coincide with the bins into which the data were sorted.

Chapter 7

Configuring PyXPlot

7.1 Overview

As is the case in Gnuplot, PyXPlot can be configured using the `set` command – for example:

```
set output 'foo.eps'
```

would cause plotted output to be written the file `foo.eps`. Typing `set` on its own returns a list of all recognised configuration parameters of the `set` command. The `unset` command may be used to return settings to their default values; it recognises a similar set of parameter names, and once again, typing `unset` on its own gives a list of them. The `show` command can be used to display the values of settings.

7.2 Configuration Files

PyXPlot can also be configured by means of a configuration file, with filename `.pyxplotrc`, which is scanned once upon startup. This file may be placed either in the user's current working directory, or in his home directory. In the event of both files existing, settings in the former override those in the latter; in the event of neither file existing, PyXPlot uses its own default settings.

The configuration file should take the form of a series of sections, each headed by a section heading enclosed in square brackets, and followed by variables declared using the format:

```
OUTPUT=foo.eps
```

The following sections are used, although they do not all need to be present in any given file:

- **settings** – contains parameters similar to those which can be set with the **set** command. A complete list is given in Section 7.4 below.

- **terminal** – contains parameters for altering the behaviour and appearance of PyXPlot's interactive terminal. A complete list is given in Section 7.5.

- **variables** – contains variable definitions. Any variables defined in this section will be predefined in the PyXPlot mathematical environment upon startup.

- **functions** – contains function definitions.

- **colours** – contains a variable 'palette', which should be set to a comma-separated list of the sequence of colours in the palette used to plot datasets. The first will be called colour 1 in PyXPlot, the second colour 2, etc. A list of recognised colour names is given in Section 7.6.

- **latex** – contains a variable 'preamble', which is prefixed to the beginning of all LaTeX text items, before the \begin{document} statement. It can be used to define custom LaTeX macros, or to include packages using the \includepackage{} command. The preamble can be changed using the **set preamble** command.

7.3   An Example Configuration File

As an example, the following is a configuration file which would represent PyXPlot's default configuration:

```
[settings]
ASPECT=1.0
AUTOASPECT=ON
AXESCOLOUR=Black
BACKUP=OFF
BAR=1.0
BINORIGIN=0
BINWIDTH=1
BOXFROM=0
BOXWIDTH=0
COLOUR=ON
DATASTYLE=points
DISPLAY=ON
DPI=300
ENLARGE=OFF
FONTSIZE=0
```

```
FUNCSTYLE=lines
GRID=OFF
GRIDAXISX=1
GRIDAXISY=1
GRIDMAJCOLOUR=Grey60
GRIDMINCOLOUR=Grey90
KEY=ON
KEYCOLUMNS=1
KEYPOS=TOP RIGHT
KEY_XOFF=0.0
KEY_YOFF=0.0
LANDSCAPE=OFF
LINEWIDTH=1.0
MULTIPLOT=OFF
ORIGINX=0.0
ORIGINY=0.0
OUTPUT=
POINTLINEWIDTH=1.0
POINTSIZE=1.0
SAMPLES=250
TERMANTIALIAS=ON
TERMINVERT=OFF
TERMTRANSPARENT=OFF
TERMTYPE=X11_singlewindow
TEXTCOLOUR=Black
TEXTHALIGN=Left
TEXTVALIGN=Bottom
TITLE=
TIT_XOFF=0.0
TIT_YOFF=0.0
WIDTH=8.0

[terminal]
COLOUR=OFF
COLOUR_ERR=Red
COLOUR_REP=Green
COLOUR_WRN=Brown
SPLASH=ON

[variables]
pi = 3.14159265358979

[colours]
palette = Black, Red, Blue, Magenta, Cyan, Brown, Salmon, Gray,
```

```
Green, NavyBlue, Periwinkle, PineGreen, SeaGreen, GreenYellow,
Orange, CarnationPink, Plum

[latex]
PREAMBLE=
```

7.4   Configuration Options: `settings` section

The following table provides a brief description of the function of each of
the parameters in the `settings` section of the above configuration file, with
a list of possible values for each:

ASPECT	**Possible values:** Any floating-point number.
	Analogous set command: `set size ratio`
	Sets the aspect ratio of plots.
AUTOASPECT	**Possible values:** `ON` / `OFF`
	Analogous set command: `set size ratio`
	Sets whether plots have the automatic aspect ratio, which is the golden ratio. If `ON`, then the above setting is ignored.
AXESCOLOUR	**Possible values:** Any recognised colour.
	Analogous set command: `set axescolour`
	Sets the colour of axis lines and ticks.
BACKUP	**Possible values:** `ON` / `OFF`
	Analogous set command: `set backup`
	When this switch is set to '`ON`', and plot output is being directed to file, attempts to write output over existing files cause a copy of the existing file to be preserved, with a tilde after its old filename (see Section 4.10).
BAR	**Possible values:** Any floating-point number.
	Analogous set command: `set bar`
	Sets the horizontal length of the lines drawn at the end of errorbars, in units of their default length.
BINORIGIN	**Possible values:** Any floating-point number
	Analogous set command: `set binorigin`
	Sets the point along the x axis from which the bins used by the `histogram` command originate.
BINWIDTH	**Possible values:** Any floating-point number
	Analogous set command: `set binwidth`
	Sets the widths of the bins used by the `histogram` command.

BOXFROM

Possible values: Any floating-point number.
Analogous set command: `set boxfrom`
Sets the horizontal point from which bars on bar charts appear to emanate.

BOXWIDTH

Possible values: Any floating-point number.
Analogous set command: `set boxwidth`
Sets the default width of boxes on barcharts. If negative, then the boxes have automatically selected widths, so that the interfaces between bars occur at the horizontal midpoints between the specified datapoints.

COLOUR

Possible values: `ON` / `OFF`
Analogous set command: `set terminal`
Sets whether output should be colour (`ON`) or monochrome (`OFF`).

DATASTYLE

Possible values: Any plot style.
Analogous set command: `set data style`
Sets the plot style used by default when plotting data files.

DISPLAY

Possible values: `ON` / `OFF`
Analogous set command: `set display`
When set to 'ON', no output is produced until the `set display` command is issued. This is useful for speeding up scripts which produce large multiplots; see Section 5.3.5 for more details.

DPI

Possible values: Any floating-point number.
Analogous set command: `set dpi`
Sets the sampling quality used, in dots per inch, when output is sent to a bitmapped terminal (the jpeg/gif/png terminals).

ENLARGE

Possible values: `ON` / `OFF`
Analogous set command: `set terminal`
When set to 'ON' output is enlarged or shrunk to fit the current paper size.

FONTSIZE

Possible values: Integers in the range $-4 \rightarrow 5$.
Analogous set command: `set fontsize`
Sets the fontsize of text, varying between LATEX's `tiny` (-4) and `Huge` (5).

FUNCSTYLE

Possible values: Any plot style.
Analogous set command: `set function style`
Sets the plot style used by default when plotting functions.

GRID	**Possible values:** `ON` / `OFF`
	Analogous set command: `set grid`
	Sets whether a grid should be displayed on plots.
GRIDAXISX	**Possible values:** Any integer.
	Analogous set command: None
	Sets the default x-axis to which gridlines should attach, if the `set grid` command is called without specifying which axes to use.
GRIDAXISY	**Possible values:** Any integer.
	Analogous set command: None
	Sets the default y-axis to which gridlines should attach, if the `set grid` command is called without specifying which axes to use.
GRIDMAJCOLOUR	**Possible values:** Any recognised colour.
	Analogous set command: `set gridmajcolour`
	Sets the colour of major grid lines.
GRIDMINCOLOUR	**Possible values:** Any recognised colour.
	Analogous set command: `set gridmincolour`
	Sets the colour of minor grid lines.
KEY	**Possible values:** `ON` / `OFF`
	Analogous set command: `set key`
	Sets whether a legend is displayed on plots.
KEYCOLUMNS	**Possible values:** Any integer > 0.
	Analogous set command: `set keycolumns`
	Sets the number of columns into which the legends of plots should be divided.
KEYPOS	**Possible values:** 'TOP RIGHT', 'TOP MIDDLE', 'TOP LEFT', 'MIDDLE RIGHT', 'MIDDLE MIDDLE', 'MIDDLE LEFT', 'BOTTOM RIGHT', 'BOTTOM MIDDLE', 'BOTTOM LEFT', 'BELOW', 'OUTSIDE'.
	Analogous set command: `set key`
	Sets where the legend should appear on plots.
KEY_XOFF	**Possible values:** Any floating-point number.
	Analogous set command: `set key`
	Sets the horizontal offset, in approximate graph-widths, that should be applied to the legend, relative to its default position, as set by `KEYPOS`.
KEY_YOFF	**Possible values:** Any floating-point number.
	Analogous set command: `set key`
	Sets the vertical offset, in approximate graph-heights, that should be applied to the legend, relative to its default position, as set by `KEYPOS`.

LANDSCAPE	**Possible values:** ON / OFF
	Analogous set command: set terminal
	Sets whether output is in portrait orientation (OFF), or landscape orientation (ON).
LINEWIDTH	**Possible values:** Any floating-point number.
	Analogous set command: set linewidth
	Sets the width of lines on plots, as a multiple of the default.
MULTIPLOT	**Possible values:** ON / OFF
	Analogous set command: set multiplot
	Sets whether multiplot mode is on or off.
ORIGINX	**Possible values:** Any floating point number.
	Analogous set command: set origin
	Sets the horizontal position, in centimetres, of the default origin of plots on the page. Most useful when multiplotting many plots.
ORIGINY	**Possible values:** Any floating point number.
	Analogous set command: set origin
	Sets the vertical position, in centimetres, of the default origin of plots on the page. Most useful when multiplotting many plots.
OUTPUT	**Possible values:** Any string.
	Analogous set command: set output
	Sets the output filename for plots. If blank, the default filename of pyxplot.foo is used, where 'foo' is an extension appropriate for the file format.
PAPER_HEIGHT	**Possible values:** Any floating-point number.
	Analogous set command: set papersize
	Sets the height of the papersize for postscript output in millimetres.
PAPER_NAME	**Possible values:** A string matching any of the papersizes listed in Table 3.1.
	Analogous set command: set papersize
	Sets the papersize for postscript output to one of the pre-defined papersizes listed in Table 3.1.
PAPER_WIDTH	**Possible values:** Any floating-point number.
	Analogous set command: set papersize
	Sets the width of the papersize for postscript output in millimetres.
POINTLINEWIDTH	**Possible values:** Any floating-point number.
	Analogous set command: set pointlinewidth
	Sets the linewidth used to stroke points onto plots, as a multiple of the default.

POINTSIZE	**Possible values:** Any floating-point number. **Analogous set command:** `set pointsize` Sets the sizes of points on plots, as a multiple of their normal sizes.
SAMPLES	**Possible values:** Any integer. **Analogous set command:** `set samples` Sets the number of samples (datapoints) to be evaluated along the x-axis when plotting a function.
TERMANTIALIAS	**Possible values:** `ON` / `OFF` **Analogous set command:** `set terminal` Sets whether jpeg/gif/png output is antialiased, i.e. whether colour boundaries are smoothed to disguise the effects of pixelisation.
TERMINVERT	**Possible values:** `ON` / `OFF` **Analogous set command:** `set terminal` Sets whether jpeg/gif/png output has normal colours (`OFF`), or inverted colours (`ON`).
TERMTRANSPARENT	**Possible values:** `ON` / `OFF` **Analogous set command:** `set terminal` Sets whether jpeg/gif/png output has transparent background (`ON`), or solid background (`OFF`).
TERMTYPE	**Possible values:** `X11_singlewindow`, `X11_multiwindow`, `X11_persist`, `PS`, `EPS`, `PDF`, `PNG`, `JPG`, `GIF` **Analogous set command:** `set terminal` Sets whether output is sent to the screen or to disk, and, in the latter case, the format of the output. The `ps` option should be used for both encapsulated and normal postscript output; these are distinguished using the `ENHANCED` option, above.
TEXTCOLOUR	**Possible values:** Any recognised colour. **Analogous set command:** `set textcolour` Sets the colour of all text output.
TEXTHALIGN	**Possible values:** `Left`, `Centre`, `Right` **Analogous set command:** `set texthalign` Sets the horizontal alignment of text labels to their given reference positions.
TEXTVALIGN	**Possible values:** `Top`, `Centre`, `Bottom` **Analogous set command:** `set textvalign` Sets the vertical alignment of text labels to their given reference positions.
TITLE	**Possible values:** Any string. **Analogous set command:** `set title` Sets the title to appear at the top of the plot.

`TIT_XOFF`	**Possible values:** Any floating point number.
	Analogous set command: `set title`
	Sets the horizontal offset of the title of the plot from its default central location.
`TIT_YOFF`	**Possible values:** Any floating point number.
	Analogous set command: `set title`
	Sets the vertical offset of the title of the plot from its default location at the top of the plot.
`WIDTH`	**Possible values:** Any floating-point number.
	Analogous set command: `set width / set size`
	Sets the width of plots in centimetres.

7.5 Configuration Options: `terminal section`

The following table provides a brief description of the function of each of the parameters in the `terminal` section of the above configuration file, with a list of possible values for each:

`COLOUR`	**Possible values:** `ON` / `OFF`
	Analogous command-line switches: `-c`, `--colour`, `-m`, `--monochrome`
	Sets whether colour highlighting should be used in the interactive terminal. If turned on, output is displayed in green, warning messages in amber, and error messages in red; these colours are configurable, as described below. Note that not all UNIX terminals support the use of colour.
`COLOUR_ERR`	**Possible values:** Any recognised terminal colour.
	Analogous command-line switches: None.
	Sets the colour in which error messages are displayed when colour highlighting is used. Note that the list of recognised colour names differs from that used in PyXPlot; a list is given at the end of this section.
`COLOUR_REP`	**Possible values:** Any recognised terminal colour.
	Analogous command-line switches: None.
	As above, but sets the colour in which PyXPlot displays its non-error-related output.
`COLOUR_WRN`	**Possible values:** Any recognised terminal colour.
	Analogous command-line switches: None.
	As above, but sets the colour in which PyXPlot displays its warning messages.

SPLASH   **Possible values:** `ON` / `OFF`
                          Analogous command-line switches: `-q`, `--quiet`,
                          `-V`, `--verbose`
                          Sets whether the standard welcome message is dis-
                          played upon startup.

The colours recognised by the `COLOUR_XXX` configuration options above are: `Red`, `Green`, `Brown`, `Blue`, `Purple`, `Magenta`, `Cyan`, `White`, `Normal`. The final option produces the default foreground colour of your terminal.

7.6   Recognised Colour Names

The following is a complete list of the colour names which PyXPlot recognises in the `set textcolour`, `set axescolour` commands, and in the `colours` section of its configuration file. It should be noted that they are case-insensitive.

```
 GreenYellow, Yellow, Goldenrod, Dandelion, Apricot, Peach, Melon,
YellowOrange, Orange, BurntOrange, Bittersweet, RedOrange, Mahogany,
Maroon, BrickRed, Red, OrangeRed, RubineRed, WildStrawberry, Salmon,
CarnationPink, Magenta, VioletRed, Rhodamine, Mulberry, RedViolet,
Fuchsia, Lavender, Thistle, Orchid, DarkOrchid, Purple, Plum, Violet,
RoyalPurple, BlueViolet, Periwinkle, CadetBlue, CornflowerBlue,
MidnightBlue, NavyBlue, RoyalBlue, Blue, Cerulean, Cyan, ProcessBlue,
SkyBlue, Turquoise, TealBlue, Aquamarine, BlueGreen, Emerald, JungleGreen,
SeaGreen, Green, ForestGreen, PineGreen, LimeGreen, YellowGreen,
SpringGreen, OliveGreen, RawSienna, Sepia, Brown, Tan, Gray, Grey,
Black, White, white, black.
```

The following further colours provide a scale of shades of grey from dark to light, also case-insensitive.

```
 grey05, grey10, grey15, grey20, grey25, grey30, grey35, grey40,
grey45, grey50, grey55, grey60, grey65, grey70, grey75, grey80,
grey85, grey90, grey95.
```

The US spelling of grey, "gray", is also accepted.

For a colour chart, the reader is referred to Appendix A, or to Appendix B of the *PyX Reference Manual*.[1]

---

[1] `http://pyx.sourceforge.net/manual/colorname.html`

Chapter 8

Command Reference

This chapter contains an alphabetically ordered list of all the commands
that PyXPlot understands.

8.1 ?

```
? [<help option> ... ]
```

The ? symbol is a shortcut to the `help` command.

8.2 !

```
! <shell command>
... '<shell command>' ...
```

Shell commands can be executed from within PyXPlot by prefixing them
with pling (!) characters, for example:

```
!mkdir foo
```

As an alternative, back-quotes (') can be used to substitute the output of a
shell command into a PyXPlot command, for example:

```
set xlabel 'echo "'" ; ls ; echo "'"'
```

Note that back-quotes cannot be used inside quote characters, and so the
following would *not* work:

```
set xlabel ''ls''
```

8.3   arrow

```
arrow [from] <x>, <y> [to] <x>, <y> [with <option> ... ]
```

Arrows may be placed on multiplot pages independently of any plots using the `arrow` command, which has the syntax:

```
arrow from x1,y1 to x2,y2
```

The `arrow` command may be followed by the `with` keyword to specify the style of the arrow. The style keywords which are accepted are `nohead`, `head` (default) or `twohead`, in addition to keywords such as `colour`, `linewidth` or `linetype`, which have the same syntax and meaning as in the `plot` command. An example would be:

```
arrow from x1,y1 to x2,y2 with twohead linetype 2 colour blue
```

Arrows receive unique multiplot identification numbers which count sequentially from one, and which are output to the terminal after the `arrow` command is called. By reference to these numbers, they can be deleted and undeleted subsequently with the `delete` and `undelete` commands respectively.

8.4   cd

```
cd <directory>
```

PyXPlot's `cd` command is very similar to the shell `cd` command; it changes the current working directory. For example:

```
cd foo
```

8.5   clear

```
clear
```

In multiplot mode, the `clear` command removes all current plots, arrows and text objects from the working page. In single plot mode it is not especially useful; it removes the current plot to leave a blank page.

The `clear` command should not be followed by any parameters.

8.6 delete

```
delete <plot number>, ...
```

The `delete` command is part of the multiplot environment; it removes plots, arrows or text items from a multiplot page. The items to be deleted should be identified using a comma-separated list of their reference numbers. Reference numbers count sequentially from zero for the first item created on a multiplot page, and are displayed on the terminal when items are created. For example:

```
delete 1,2,3
```

would remove item numbers 1, 2 and 3.

Having been deleted, multiplot items can be restored using the `undelete` command.

8.7 edit

```
edit <plot number>
```

The `edit` command is part of the multiplot environment; it allows one to modify the properties of any plot on a multiplot. The desired plot should be identified using the reference number which it was given when it was created using the `plot` command; it would have been displayed on the terminal at that time. For example, consider the following command sequence:

```
edit 1
set textcolour red
replot
```

Here, the `edit` command is used to select the plot with reference number 1. The `set textcolour red` command which follows then changes the settings of this plot, taking effect when the `replot` command is called.

The `edit` command also has the effect of resetting all of PyXPlot's plot settings to those used to produce the chosen plot, and so in conjunction with the `show` command, can be used to inspect as well as modify the settings of any plot on a multiplot page. For example:

```
edit 1
show textcolour
```

would show the text colour used in plot 1.

Having issued the `edit` command, no further command needs to be issued to return to a state of adding plots to a multiplot rather than editing the existing plots; simply call the `plot` command rather than the `replot` command to do this.

8.8   eps

```
eps '<filename>' [at <x>, <y>] [rotate <angle>] [width <width>]
                 [height <height>]
```

The `eps` command inserts an image into the current multiplot from an encapsulated postscript (eps) file. The `at` modifier can be used to specify where the bottom-left corner of the image should be placed; if it is not, then the image is placed at the origin. The `rotate` modifier can be used to rotate the image by any angle, measured in degrees counter-clockwise. The `width` or `height` modifiers can be used to specify the width or height with which the image should be rendered; both should be specified in centimetres. If neither is specified then the image will be rendered with the native dimensions specified within the postscript. The `eps` command is often useful in multiplot mode, allowing postscript images to be combined with plots, text labels, etc.

8.9   exec

```
exec <command>
```

The `exec` command can be used to execute PyXPlot commands contained within string variables. For example:

```
terminal="eps"
exec "set terminal %s"%(terminal)
```

It can also be used to write obfuscated PyXPlot scripts.

8.10   exit

```
exit
```

The `exit` command can be used to quit PyXPlot. If multiple command files, or a mixture of command files and interactive sessions, were specified on PyXPlot's command line, then PyXPlot moves onto the next command-line item after receiving the `exit` command.

PyXPlot may also be quit be pressing CTRL-D or via the `quit` command. In interactive mode, CTRL-C terminates the current command, if one is running. When running a script, CTRL-C terminates execution of it.

8.11   fit

```
fit [<range specifier> ...] <function> '<datafile>'
    [index <index specifier>] [using <using specifier>]
    via <variable>[, <variable>, ...]
```

The `fit` command may be used to fit functional forms to data in files. A simple example might be:

```
f(x) = a*x+b
fit f(x) 'data.dat' index 1 using 2:3 via a,b
```

The coefficients to be varied are listed after the `via` keyword; the modifiers `index`, `every` and `using` have the same meanings as in the `plot` command.

This is useful for producing best-fit lines and also has applications in estimating the gradients of datasets. The syntax is essentially identical to that used by Gnuplot, though a few points, outlined in Section 2.11, are worth noting.

8.12   help

```
help [<topic> [<sub-topic> ... ] ]
```

The `help` command provides an hierarchical source of information which is supplementary to that in the Users' Guide. To obtain information on any particular topic, type `help` followed by the name of the topic. For example:

```
help commands
```

provides information on PyXPlot's commands. Some topics have sub-topics; these are listed at the end of each help page. To view them, add further words to the end of your help request – an example might be:

```
help commands help
```

Information is arranged with general information about PyXPlot under the heading `about` and information about PyXPlot's commands under `commands`. Information about the format that input data files should take can be found under `datafile`. Other categories are self-explanatory.

To exit any help page, press the `q` key.

8.13   histogram

```
histogram [range specification] <function name> '<datafile>'
    [using <using specifier>] [select <select specifier>]
    [index <index specifier>] [every <every specifier>]
    [binwidth <bin width>] [binorigin <bin origin>]
    [bins (x1, x2, ...)]
```

The `histogram` command takes a data file and counts the number of points in various bins, producing a function the area under which is equal to the number of points for each bin. The width and starting position of the bins can be specified using the `binwidth` and `binorigin` modifiers, or a user-supplied set of bins can be used with the `bins` modifier. For example:

```
histogram f() 'output.dat' u 2 binwidth 2
```

produces a function $f()$, which contains the data in the second column of the `output.dat` file binned into bins of width 2. A range specifier can be used to restrict the set of data in the data file that is to be binned; for example:

```
histogram [0:10] f() 'data.dat' bins (0,1,3,6,10)
```

would only bin data between 0 and 10, and would do so into the user-specified bins.

8.14   history

```
history [<N>]
```

The `history` command outputs the current command-line history to the terminal. The optional parameter, `N`, if supplied, causes only the first N lines to be printed.

8.15   jpeg

```
jpeg '<filename>' [at <x>, <y>] [rotate <angle>] [width <width>]
                [height <height>]
```

The `jpeg` command inserts an image into the current multiplot from a jpeg file in disk. The `at` modifier can be used to specify where the bottom-left corner of the image should be placed; if it is not, then the image is placed at the origin. The `rotate` modifier can be used to rotate the image by any angle, measured in degrees counter-clockwise. The `width` or `height` modifiers can be used to specify the width or height with which the image should be rendered; both should be specified in centimetres. If neither is specified then the image will be rendered with the native dimensions specified within the jpeg file (if any). The `jpeg` command is often useful in multiplot mode, allowing images to be combined with plots, text labels, etc.

8.16   list

```
list
```

The `list` command outputs a listing of all of the items on a multiplot, giving their reference numbers and the commands used to produce them. For example:

```
pyxplot> list
#  ID | Command
     0    plot f(x)
d  1    text 'Figure 1: A plot of f(x)'
     2    text 'Figure 1: A plot of $f(x)$'

# Items marked 'd' are deleted
```

In this example, the user has plotted a graph of $f(x)$, and added a caption to it. The `ID` column lists the reference numbers of each multiplot item. Item `1` has been deleted, and this is indicated by the `d` to the left of its reference number.

8.17   load

```
load '<filename>'
```

The `load` command executes a PyXPlot command script file, just as if its contents had been typed into the current terminal. For example:

```
load 'foo'
```

would have the same effect as typing the contents of the file `foo` into the present session.

Wildcards can be used in the load command, in which case *all* command files matching the given wildcard are executed, for example:

```
load '*.script'
```

8.18   move

```
move <plot number> to <x>, <y>
```

The `move` command is part of the multiplot environment; it can be used to move items around on a multiplot page. The item to be moved should be specified using the reference number which it was given when it was created; it would have been displayed on the terminal at that time. For example:

```
move 23 to 8,8
```

This would move multiplot item 23 to position $(8,8)$ centimetres. If this item were a plot, the end result would be the same as if the command `set origin 8,8` had been called before it had originally been plotted.

8.19   plot

```
plot [<range specifier> ...] ('<filename>'|<function>)
     [using <using specifier>] [axes <axis specifier>]
     [select <select specifier>]
     [index <index specifier>]
     [every <every specifier>]
     [with <style> [<style modifier> ... ] ]
```

The `plot` command is the main workhorse command of PyXPlot, which is used to produce all plots. For example to plot the sine function:

```
plot sin(x)
```

Ranges for the axes of a graph can be specified by placing them in square brackets before the name of the function to be plotted. An example of this syntax would be:

```
plot [-pi:pi] sin(x)
```

which would plot the function $\sin(x)$ between $-\pi$ and π.

Data files may also be plotted as well as functions, in which case the filename of the data file to be plotted should be enclosed in apostrophes. An example of this syntax would be:

```
plot 'data.dat' with points
```

which would plot the file called `data.dat`. Section 2.6 should be studied for further details of the format that is expected of input data files, and how PyXPlot may be directed to plot only certain portions of data files.

Multiple datasets can be plotted on a single graph by listing them with commas separating them:

```
plot sin(x) with colour blue, cos(x) with linetype 2
```

8.19.1   axes

In plots which have multiple parallel axes – for example, an x-axis along its lower edge and an $x2$-axis along its upper edge – the pair of axes against which data should be plotted should be specified using the modifier `axes` following the name of the function or data file to be plotted, for example:

```
plot sin(x) axes x2y1
```

8.19.2 with

The style in which data should be plotted may be specified following the modifier `with`, with the following syntax:

```
plot sin(x) with points
```

The following plot styles are recognised: `lines`, `points`, `linespoints`, `dots`, `boxes`, `wboxes`, `impulses`, `steps`, `histeps`, `fsteps`, `xerrorbars`, `yerrorbars`, `xyerrorbars`, `xerrorrange`, `yerrorrange`, `xyerrorrange`, `arrows_head`, `arrows_nohead`, `arrows_twohead`, `csplines`, `acsplines`.

In addition, `lp` and `pl` are recognised as abbreviations for `linespoints`; `errorbars` is recognised as an abbreviation for `yerrorbars`; `errorrange` is recognised as an abbreviation for `yerrorrange`; and `arrows_twoway` is recognised as an alternative for `arrows_twohead`.

As well as plot styles, the `with` modifier can also be followed by the following keywords:

`linetype` – specifies the line type (e.g. dotted) used by the lines plot style.

`linewidth` – specifies the width of line, in pt, used by the lines plot style.

`pointsize` – specifies the size of data points, relative to the default size, used by the points plot style.

`pointlinewidth` – as above, but specifies the linewidth, in pt (1 pt = 1/72 inch), used to render the crosses, circles, etc, used to mark data points.

`linestyle` – this can be used in conjunction with the `set linestyle` command to save default plot styles.

`colour` – specifies the colour used to plot the dataset, either by one of the recognised colour names or by an integer, to use one from the current palette.

`fillcolour` – relevant to the `boxes` and `wboxes` plot styles, specifies a colour with which bar charts should be filled.

An example using several of these keywords would be:

```
plot sin(x) axes x2y1 with colour blue linetype 2 \
                      linewidth 5
```

8.20   print

`print <expression>`

The `print` command outputs the value of a mathematical expression to the terminal. It is most often used to find the value of a variable, though it can also be used to produce formatted output from a PyXPlot script. For example:

`print a`

would print the value of the variable a.

8.21   pwd

`pwd`

The `pwd` command prints the location of the current working directory.

8.22   quit

`quit`

The `quit` command can be used to exit PyXPlot. See `exit` for more details.

8.23   refresh

`refresh`

The `refresh` command produces an exact copy of the latest display. This can be useful, for example, after changing the terminal type, to produce a second copy of a plot in a different graphic format. It differs from the `replot` command in that it doesn't replot anything; use of the `set` command since the previous `plot` command has no effect on the output. The `refresh` command is also especially useful in the multiplot environment: it can be used to produce second copies of multiplot pages where there need not necessarily even be any plots; there might perhaps only be textual items and arrows.

8.24   replot

```
replot [<plot number>]
```

In single plot mode, the `replot` command causes the most recent plot command to be re-run. This can be useful to replot a data file which has changed in the meantime, but also to change some aspect of a plot within PyXPlot itself. Uses of the `set` command between the original `plot` command and the calling of the `replot` command are applied to the new plot. For example:

```
plot sin(x)
set textcolour red
replot
```

In multiplot mode, the `replot` command acts by default upon the last plot item which was added to the multiplot page, and causes that to be replotted. It is possible to change this behaviour by first calling the `edit` command, in which case any given plot within a multiplot can be modified and replotted.

Specifying a function or data file after the `replot` command causes that function or data file to be added to the plot. The syntax here is the same as for the `plot` command. For example:

```
replot sin(x) axes x2y1 with linespoints
```

will add a plot of the function $\sin(x)$ to the current plot.

8.25   reset

```
reset
```

The `reset` command returns the values of all settings that have been changed with the `set` command back to their default values.

8.26   save

```
save '<filename>'
```

The `save` command saves a list of all of the commands which have been executed in the current interactive PyXPlot session into a given file. The filename of the desired location for this file should be placed in quotes, for example:

```
save 'foo'
```

would save a command history into the file named `foo`.

8.27   set

```
set <option> <value>
```

The `set` command sets the value of various operational parameters within PyXPlot. For example:

```
set pointsize 2
```

would sets the default point size to 2. The basic syntax always follows that above: the `set` command should be followed by some keyword specifying which setting it is which should be set. Settings which work in an on/off fashion tend to take a syntax along the lines of:

  `set key`   Set option ON
  `set nokey`   Set option OFF

More details of the functions of each individual setting can be found in the subsections below, which forms a complete list of the recognised setting keywords.

The reader should also see the `show` command, which can be used to display the current values of settings, and the `unset` command, which returns settings to their default values. Section 7.2 describes how commonly used settings can be saved into a configuration file.

8.27.1   arrow

```
set arrow <arrow number> from [<co-ordinate>] <x>,
          [<co-ordinate>] <y> to [<co-ordinate>] <x>,
          [<co-ordinate>] <y> [with <modifier> ]

<co-ordinate> = ( first | second | screen | graph |
                    axis<axisnumber>                )
```

The `set arrow` command causes an arrow to be added to a plot. An example of its syntax would be:

```
set arrow 1 from 0,0 to 1,1
```

which would cause an arrow to be drawn between the points $(0,0)$ and $(1,1)$, as measured on the x and y axes. The tag `1` immediately following the `arrow` keyword is an identification number, and allows the arrow to be removed later with the `unset arrow` command. By default the co-ordinates are measured relative to the first x- and y-axes, but can be specified in a range of co-ordinate systems. These are specified as follows:

```
set arrow 1 from first 0, second 0 to axis3 1, axis4 1
```

As can be seen, the name of the desired co-ordinate system precedes the position value in that co-ordinate system. The co-ordinate system `first`, the default, measures the graph using the x- and y-axes. `second` uses the $x2$- and $y2$-axes. `screen` and `graph` both measure in centimetres from the origin of the graph. The syntax `axisn` may also be used, to use the n th x- or y-axis; for example, `axis3` above.

The `set arrow` command can be followed by the keyword `with`, to specify the style of the arrow. For example, the specifiers `nohead`, `head` and `twohead`, after the keyword `with`, can be used to make arrows with no arrow heads, normal arrow heads, or two arrow heads. `twoway` is an alias for `twohead`. Normal line type modifiers can also be used here. For example:

```
set arrow 2 from first 0, second 2.5 to axis3 0,
          axis4 2.5 with colour blue nohead
```

8.27.2   autoscale

```
set autoscale <axis>[<axis>... ]
```

The `autoscale` setting causes PyXPlot to choose the scaling for an axis automatically based on the data and/or functions to be plotted against it. As an example of the syntax:

```
set autoscale x1
```

would cause the size of the first x-axis to be scaled to fit the data. Multiple axes can be specified, viz.:

```
set autoscale x1y3
```

Note that ranges explicitly specified in a `plot` command will override the autoscale setting.

8.27.3   axescolour

```
set axescolour <colour>
```

The `axescolour` setting changes the colour of the plot's axes. For example:

```
set axescolour blue
```

changes the axes to be blue. Any of the recognised colour names listed in Section 7.6 can be used.

8.27.4   axis

```
set axis <axis>, ...
```

The command:

```
set axis x2
```

may be used to add a second x-axis to a plot, with default settings. In general, there is no practical reason to use this command, as a second x-axis would implicitly be created by any of the following statements:

```
set x2label 'foo' \\
set x2ticdir outwards \\
plot sin(x) axes x2y1
```

Of more practical use is the `unset x2` command, which is used to remove an axis once it has been added to a plot. After executing:

```
set x2label 'foo'
```

for example, the only way to tell PyXPlot to subsequently produce a plot without a second x-axis would be to delete this axis with the following command:

```
unset axis x2
```

Note that in this case, the `unset x2label` command would be sufficient to remove the label 'foo' placed on the new axis, but not sufficient to delete the new axis that the `set x2label` command implicitly created. Multiple axes can be deleted in a single `unset axis` statement, for example:

```
unset axis x2x4x5
```

In the special cases of `unset axis x1` or `unset axis y1`, these axes cannot be deleted; a plot must have at least one x- and one y-axis. Instead, the `unset axis` command restores these axes to their default configurations, removing any set titles or ranges that they might have been given.

8.27.5   backup

```
set backup
```

The setting `backup` changes PyXPlot's behaviour when it detects that a file which it is about to write is going to overwrite an existing file. Whereas by default the existing file would be overwritten by the new one, when the `backup` setting is turned on, it is renamed, placing a tilde at the end of

its filename. For example, suppose that a plot were to be written with filename `out.ps`, but such a file already existed. With the backup setting turned on the existing file would be renamed `out.ps∼` to save it from being overwritten.

The setting may be turned off via `set nobackup`.

8.27.6 bar

```
set bar ( large | small | <barsize> )
```

The `bar` setting changes the size of the bar on the end of the error bars, relative to the current point size. For example:

```
set bar 2
```

sets the bars to be twice the size of the points. The options `large` and `small` are equivalent to 1 (the default) and 0 (no bar) respectively.

8.27.7 binorigin

```
set binorigin <bin origin>
```

The `binorigin` setting changes the position on the x axis from whence the bins used by the histogram command originate.

8.27.8 binwidth

```
set binwidth <bin width>
```

The `binwidth` setting changes the width of the bins used by the histogram command.

8.27.9 boxfrom

```
set boxfrom <value>
```

The `boxfrom` setting alters PyXPlot's behaviour when plotting bar charts. It changes the horizontal line (vertical point; y-axis value) from which the boxes of bar charts appear to emanate. The default value is zero (i.e. boxes extend from the line of the y-axis). An example of its syntax would be:

```
set boxfrom 2
```

which would make the boxes of a barchart emanate vertically from the line $y = 2$.

8.27.10   boxwidth

```
set boxwidth <width>
```

The `boxwidth` setting alters PyXPlot's behaviour when plotting bar charts. It sets the default width of the boxes used, in graph x-axis units. If the specified width is negative then, as happens by default, the boxes have automatically selected widths, such that the interfaces between them occur at the horizontal midpoints between their specified x-positions. For example:

```
set boxwidth 2
```

would set all boxes to be two units wide.

```
set boxwidth -2
```

would set all of the bars to have differing widths, centred upon their specified x-positions, such that their interfaces occur at the horizontal midpoints between them.

8.27.11   data style

See `set style data`.

8.27.12   display

```
set [no]display
```

By default, whenever an item is added to a multiplot, or an existing item moved or replotted, the whole multiplot is replotted to show the change. This can be a time-consuming process on large and complex multiplots. For this reason, the `set nodisplay` command is provided, which stops PyXPlot from producing any output. The `set display` command can subsequently be issued to return to normal behaviour.

This can be especially useful in scripts which produce large multiplots. There is no point in producing output at each step in the construction of a large multiplot, and so a great speed increase can be achieved by wrapping the script with:

```
set nodisplay
[...prepare large multiplot...]
set display
refresh
```

8.27.13   dpi

```
set dpi <value>
```

When PyXPlot is set to produce bitmapped graphics output, using the `gif`, `jpg` or `png` terminals (see the `set terminal` command), the `dpi` setting changes the number of dots per inch with which these graphics files are produced. That is to say, it changes the image resolution of these file formats:

```
set dpi 100
```

sets the output to a resolution of 100 dots per inch. Higher dpi values yield better quality images, but larger file sizes.

8.27.14   fontsize

```
set fontsize <value>
```

The `fontsize` setting changes the size of the fount[1] used to render all text labels which appear on a plot, including keys, axis labels, etc. The value specified should be an integer in the range -4 to 5, corresponding to LaTeX's tiny (-4) and Huge (5) sizes, for example:

```
set fontsize 2
```

The default value is zero, LaTeX's normal fount size. As an alternative, fount sizes can be specified directly in the LaTeX text of labels, for example:

```
set xlabel '\Large This is a BIG label'
```

8.27.15   function style

See `set style function`.

8.27.16   grid

```
set [no]grid <axis> ...
```

The `grid` setting controls whether a grid is placed behind a plot or not. Issuing the command:

```
set grid
```

---

[1]This is not a spelling mistake. 'font', by contrast, *would* be a spelling mistake. See the Oxford English Dictionary.

would cause a grid to be drawn with its grid lines connecting to the ticks of
the default axes (usually the first x- and y-axes). Conversely, issuing:

```
set nogrid
```

would remove from the plot all grid lines associated with the ticks of any
axes. One or more axes can be specified for the `set grid` command; a grid
will then be drawn to connect with the ticks of these axes. An example of
this syntax would be:

```
set grid x1 y3
```

which would cause gridlines to be drawn from ticks of the first x- and third
y-axes.

It is possible, though not always aesthetically very pleasing, to draw
gridlines from multiple parallel axes, for example:

```
set grid x1x2x3
```

8.27.17   gridmajcolour

```
set gridmajcolour <colour>
```

The `gridmajcolour` setting changes the colour that is used to plot the
gridlines (see the `set grid` command) which are associated with the major
ticks of axes (i.e. major gridlines). For example:

```
set gridmajcolour purple
```

would cause the major grid lines to be drawn in purple. Any of the recog-
nised colour names listed in Section 7.6 can be used.

See also the `set gridmincolour` command.

8.27.18   gridmincolour

```
set gridmincolour <colour>
```

The `gridmincolour` setting changes the colour that is used to plot the
gridlines (see the `set grid` command) which are associated with the minor
ticks of axes (i.e. minor gridlines). For example:

```
set gridmincolour purple
```

would cause the minor grid lines to be drawn in purple. Any of the recognised
colour names listed in Section 7.6 can be used.

See also the `set gridmajcolour` command.

8.27.19   key

```
set key [ <position> ... ] [<xoffset>, <yoffset>]
```

The setting `key` determines whether a legend is placed on a plot, and if so, where it should be located on the plot. Issuing the command:

```
set key
```

simply causes a legend to be added to the plot in its default position, usually the plot's upper-right corner. The converse action is achieved by:

```
set nokey
```

or:

```
unset key
```

both of which cause a plot to have no legend. A position for the key may also be specified after the `set key` command, for example:

```
set key bottom left
```

Recognised positions are `top`, `bottom`, `left`, `right`, `below`, `above`, `outside`, `xcentre` and `ycentre`. In addition, if none of these quite achieved the desired result, a positional offset may be specified after one of the position keywords above. The first value is assumed to be an x-offset, and the second a y-offset, in centimetres. For example:

```
set key bottom left 0.0, -0.5
```

would display a key below the bottom left corner of the graph.

8.27.20   keycolumns

```
set keycolumns <value>
```

The `keycolumns` settings sets how many columns the legend of a plot should be arranged into. By default, all of the entries in the legends of plots are arranged in a single vertical list. However, for plots with very large number of datasets, it may be preferably to split this list into several columns. The `set keycolumns` command can be followed by any positive integer, for example:

```
set keycolumns 3
```

8.27.21   label

```
set label <label number> '<text>' [<co-ordinate>] <x>,
                                   [<co-ordinate>] <y>
                                   [rotate <angle>]
                                   [with colour <colour>]

<co-ordinate> = ( first | second | screen | graph |
                  axis<axisnumber>                  )
```

The `set label` command can be used to place text labels onto a plot. For example:

```
set label 1 'Hello' 0, 0
```

would place the word 'Hello' at plot co-ordinates $(0, 0)$, as measured on the x- and y-axes. The tag `1` immediately following the `label` keyword is an identification number, and allows the label to be removed later with the `unset label` command. By default the position co-ordinates of the label are measured relative to the first x- and y-axes, but can be specified in a range of co-ordinate systems. These are specified as follows:

```
set label 1 'Hello' first 0, second 0
```

As can be seen, the name of the desired co-ordinate system precedes the position value in that co-ordinate system. Following Gnuplot's nomenclature, the co-ordinate system `first` the default, measures the graph using the x- and y-axes. `second` uses the $x2$- and $y2$-axes. `screen` and `graph` both measure in centimetres from the origin of the graph. The syntax `axisn` may also be used, to use the n th x- or y-axis; for example, `axis3`:

```
set label 1 'Hello' axis3 1, axis4 1
```

A rotation angle may optionally be specified after the keyword `rotate` to produce text rotated to any arbitrary angle, measured in degrees counter-clockwise. The following example would produce upward-running text:

```
set label 1 'Hello' 1.2, 2.5 rotate 90
```

By default the labels are black; however, an arbitrary colour may be specified using the `with colour` modifier. For example:

```
set label 3 'A purple label' 0, 0 with colour purple
```

will place a purple label at the origin.

8.27.22 linestyle

```
set linestyle <style number> <style specifier> ...
```

At times, the string of style keywords following the `with` modifier in plot commands can grow rather unwieldily long. For clarity, frequently used plot styles can be stored as `linestyles`; this is true of styles involving points as well as lines. The syntax for setting a line style is:

```
set linestyle 2 points pointtype 3
```

where the `2` is the identification number of the line style. In a subsequent plot statement, this line style can be recalled as follows:

```
plot sin(x) with linestyle 2
```

8.27.23 linewidth

```
set linewidth <value>
```

Sets the default line width, in units of pt ($1\,\mathrm{pt} = 1/72\,\mathrm{inch}$), of the lines used to plot datasets onto graphs with the `lines` plot style. For example in the following statement:

```
set linewidth 3
plot sin(x) with lines
```

lines of three times the default thickness are plotted. The `set linewidth` setting only affects plot statements where no line width is manually specified.

8.27.24 logscale

```
set logscale [<axis> ... ] [<base>]
```

The `logscale` setting causes an axis to be laid out with logarithmically, rather than linearly, spaced intervals. For example, issuing the command:

```
set log
```

would cause all of the axes of a plot to be scaled logarithmically. Alternatively only one, or a selection of axes, can be set to scale logarithmically as follows:

```
set log x1 y2
```

This would cause the first x- and second y-axes to be scaled logarithmically. Linear scaling can be restored to all axes via:

```
set nolog
```

or:

```
unset log
```

and to only one, or a selection of axes, via:

```
set nolog x1 y2
```

or:

```
unset log x1y2
```

Optionally, a base may be specified at the end of the `set logscale` command, to produce axes labelled in logarithms of arbitrary bases. The default base is 10.

8.27.25   multiplot

```
set multiplot
```

Issuing the command:

```
set multiplot
```

causes PyXPlot to enter multiplot mode, which allows many graphs to be plotted together and displayed side-by-side. See Section 5.3 for a full discussion of multiplot mode.

8.27.26   mxtics

See `set xtics`.

8.27.27   mytics

See `set xtics`.

8.27.28   noarrow

```
set noarrow [<arrow number>]
```

Issuing the command:

```
set noarrow
```

removes all arrows produced with the `set arrow` command from the current plot. Alternatively, individual arrows can be removed using the syntax:

```
set noarrow 2
```

where the tag `2` here is the identification number given to the arrow to be removed when it was initially specified with the `set arrow` command.

8.27.29   noaxis

```
set noaxis <axis specification>, ...
```

The `set noaxis` command is equivalent to the `unset axis` command. It should be followed by a comma-separated lists of axes, which are to be removed from the current axis configuration.

8.27.30   nobackup

See `backup`.

8.27.31   nodisplay

See `display`.

8.27.32   nogrid

```
set nogrid [<axis> ... ]
```

Issuing the command `set nogrid` removes gridlines from the current plot. On its own, the command removes all gridlines from the plot, but alternatively, those gridlines connected to the ticks of certain axes can selectively be removed. The syntax for doing this is as follows:

```
set nogrid x1 y2
```

8.27.33   nokey

```
set nokey
```

Issuing the command `set nokey` causes plots to be generated with no legend. See the command `set key` for more details.

8.27.34   nolabel

```
set nolabel [<label number> ... ]
```

Issuing the command:

```
set nolabel
```

removes all text labels, as set using the `set label` command, from the current plot. Alternatively, individual labels can be removed using the syntax:

```
set nolabel 2
```

where the tag `2` here is the identification number given to the label to be removed when it was initially set using the `set label` command.

8.27.35   nolinestyle

```
set nolinestyle <style number>
```

The `nolinestyle` setting deletes a line style. For example, the command:

```
set nolinestyle 3
```

would delete the third line style, if defined. See the command `set linestyle` for more details.

8.27.36   nologscale

```
set nologscale [<axis> ... ]
```

The `logscale` setting causes an axis to be laid out with logarithmically, rather than linearly, spaced intervals. Conversely, the `nologscale` setting is used to restore linear scaling. For example, issuing the command:

```
set nolog
```

would cause all of the axes of a plot to be scaled linearly. Alternatively only one, or a selection of axes, can be set to scale linearly as follows:

```
set nologscale x1 y2
```

This would cause the first x- and second y-axes to be scaled linearly.

8.27.37   nomultiplot

```
set nomultiplot
```

Issuing the command `set nomultiplot` places PyXPlot into single plotting mode. See above for a detailed discussion of PyXPlot's multiplot and single plot modes. Broadly speaking, single plot mode is used to produce single graphs on their own; multiplot mode is used to produce galleries of many plots side-by-side.

8.27.38   notitle

```
set notitle
```

Issuing the command `set notitle` will cause graphs to be produced with no title at the top.

8.27.39 noxtics

```
set no<axis specification>tics
```

This command causes graphs to be produced with no tick marks along their x-axes.

8.27.40 noytics

Similar to the `set noxtics` command, but acts on the y-axis.

8.27.41 origin

```
set origin <x>, <y>
```

The `origin` setting controls the default location of graphs on a multiplot. For example, the command:

```
set origin 3,5
```

would cause the next graph to be plotted at position $(3, 5)$ centimetres on the multiplot page. The `set origin` command is of little use outside multiplot mode.

8.27.42 output

```
set output '<filename>'
```

The `output` setting controls the name of the file that is produced for non-interactive terminals (`postscript`, `eps`, `jpeg`, `gif` and `png`). For example:

```
set output 'myplot.eps'
```

causes the output to be written to the file `myplot.eps`.

8.27.43 palette

```
set palette <colour>, [<colour> ... ]
```

PyXPlot has a palette of colours which it assigns sequentially to datasets when colours are not manually assigned. This is also the palette to which reference is made if the user issues a command such as:

```
plot sin(x) with colour 5
```

requesting the fifth colour from the palette. By default, this palette contains a range of distinctive colours. However, the user can choose to substitute his own list of colours using the `set palette` command. It should be followed by a comma-separated list of colour names, for example:

```
set palette red,green,blue
```

If, after issuing this command, the following plot statement were to be executed:

```
plot sin(x), cos(x), tan(x), exp(x)
```

the first function would be plotted in red, the second in green, and the third in blue. Upon reaching the fourth, the palette would cycle back to red.

Any of the recognised colour names listed in Section 7.6 can be used.

8.27.44   papersize

```
set papersize ( size | <height>,<width> )
```

The `papersize` option sets the size of output produced by the postscript terminal. This can take the form of either a recognised paper size name – a list of these is given below – or a (height, width) pair of values, both measured in millimetres. For example:

```
set papersize a4
set papersize letter
set papersize 200,100
```

A list of recognised papersizes can be found in Figure 3.1.

8.27.45   pointlinewidth

```
set pointlinewidth <value>
```

The `pointlinewidth` setting changes the width of the lines that are used to plot data points. For instance:

```
set pointlinewidth 20
```

would cause points to be plotted with lines 20 times the default thickness.

Note that `pointlinewidth` can be abbreviated as `plw`.

8.27.46   pointsize

```
set pointsize <value>
```

The `pointsize` setting changes the size at which points are plotted relative to their default size. It should be followed by a single value, the relative size, which can be any positive number. For example:

```
set pointsize 1.5
```

would cause points to be plotted 1.5 times the default size.

8.27.47 preamble

```
set preamble <text>
```

The `preamble` setting changes the preamble that is prepended to each item of text rendered using LaTeX. This allows, for example, different packages to be loaded by default and user-defined macros to be set up.

8.27.48 samples

```
set samples <value>
```

The `samples` setting determines the number of values along the x-axis at which functions are evaluated when they are plotted. For example:

```
set samples 100
```

causes 100 points to be evaluated. Increasing this value will cause functions to be plotted more smoothly, but also more slowly, and the postscript files generated will also be larger.

When functions are plotted with the `points` plot style, this setting controls the number of points plotted.

8.27.49 size

```
set size (<width>|ratio <ratio>|noratio|square)
```

The setting `size` is deprecated: use `set width` instead. It sets the width of the plot in centimetres. However, the command `set size`, when followed by the keyword `ratio`, is still used to set the aspect ratio of plots. See the `ratio` setting below for details.

noratio

```
set size noratio
```

Running:

```
set size noratio
```

resets PyXPlot to produce plots with its default aspect ratio, which is the golden section. Other aspect ratios can be set with the `set size ratio` command.

ratio

```
set size ratio <ratio>
```

This command sets the aspect ratio of plots produced by PyXPlot. The height of resulting plots will equal the plot width, as set by the `set width` command, multiplied by this aspect ratio. For example:

```
set size ratio 2.0
```

would cause PyXPlot to produce plots that are twice as high as they are wide. The default aspect ratio which PyXPlot uses is a golden ratio of $2/(1 + \sqrt{5})$.

square

```
set size square
```

The command:

```
set size square
```

sets PyXPlot to produce square plots, i.e. with unit aspect ratio. Other aspect ratios can be set with the `set size ratio` command.

8.27.50   style

```
set style { data | function } <style modifier> ...
```

The `set style data` command affects the default style with which data from files is plotted. Likewise the `set style function` command changes the default style with which functions are plotted. Any valid style modifier can be used. For example:

```
set style data points
set style function lines linestyle 1
```

would cause data files to be plotted by default using points and functions using lines with the first defined line style.

8.27.51   terminal

```
set terminal <terminal type> [<option> ... ]
```

Syntax:

```
set terminal { X11_singlewindow | X11_multiwindow | X11_persist |
               postscript | eps | pdf | gif | png | jpg }
             { colour | color | monochrome }
             { portrait | landscape }
             { invert | noinvert }
             { transparent | solid }
             { antialias | noantialias }
             { enlarge | noenlarge }
```

The `set terminal` command controls the graphic format in which PyX-Plot should output plots, for example setting whether it should output plots to files or display them in a window on the screen. Various options can also be set within many of the graphic formats which PyXPlot supports using this command.

The following graphic formats are supported: `X11_singlewindow`, `X11_multiwindow`, `X11_persist`, `postscript`, `eps`, `pdf`, `gif`, `jpeg`, `png`. To select one of these formats, simply type the name of the desired format after the `set terminal` command. To obtain more details on each, see the subtopics below.

The following settings, which can also be typed following the `set terminal` command, are used to change the options within some of these graphic formats: `colour`, `monochrome`, `enhanced`, `noenhanced`, `portrait`, `landscape`, `invert`, `noinvert`, `transparent`, `solid`, `enlarge`, `noenlarge`. Details of each of these can be found below.

antialias

The `antialias` terminal option causes plots produced with the bitmap (gif, jpg and png) terminals to be antialiased; this is the default behaviour.

colour

The `colour` terminal option causes plots to be produced in colour; this is the default behaviour.

color

The `color` terminal option is provided for the convenience of users unable to spell `colour`.

enlarge

The `enlarge` terminal option causes the complete plot to be enlarged or shrunk to fit the current paper size.

eps

Sends output to eps files. The filename to which output is to be sent should be set using the `set output` command; the default is `pyxplot.eps`. This terminal produces encapsulated postscript suitable for including in, for example, LATEXdocuments.

gif

The `gif` terminal renders output as gif files. The filename to which output is to be sent should be set using the `set output` command; the default is `pyxplot.gif`. The number of dots per inch used can be changed using the dpi option; the filename using `set output`. Transparent gifs can be produced with the `transparent` option. Also of relevance is the `invert` option for producing gifs with inverted colours.

invert

The `invert` terminal option causes the bitmap terminals (`gif`, `jpeg`, `png`) to produce output with inverted colours. This is useful for producing plots for slideshows, where bright colours on a dark background may be desired.

jpeg

The `jpeg` terminal renders output as jpeg files. The filename to which output is to be sent should be set using the `set output` command; the default is `pyxplot.jpg`. The number of dots per inch used can be changed using the dpi option. Of relevance is the `invert` option for producing jpegs with inverted colours.

landscape

The `landscape` terminal option causes PyXPlot's output to be displayed in rotated orientation. This is useful for printing as you get more on your sheet of paper that way around; probably less useful for plotting things on screen.

monochrome

The `monochrome` terminal option causes plots to be rendered in black and white; by default, different dash styles are used to differentiate between lines on plots with several datasets.

noantialias

The `noantialias` terminal option causes plots produced with the bitmap (gif, jpg and png) terminals not to be antialiased.

noenlarge

The `noenlarge` terminal option causes the output not to be scaled (the opposite of `enlarge` above).

noinvert

The `noinvert` terminal option causes the bitmap terminals (`gif`, `jpeg`, `png`) to produce normal output without inverted colours. The converse of `inverse`.

pdf

The `pdf` terminal options causes pdf format output files to be produced.

png

The `png` terminal renders output as png files. The filename to which output is to be sent should be set using the `set output` command; the default is `pyxplot.png`. The number of dots per inch used can be changed using the dpi option; the filename using `set output`. Transparent pngs can be produced with the `transparent` option. Also of relevance is the `invert` option for producing pngs with inverted colours.

portrait

The `portrait` terminal option causes PyXPlot's output to be displayed in upright (normal) orientation.

postscript

Sends output to postscript files. The filename to which output is to be sent should be set using the `set output` command; the default is `pyxplot.ps`. This terminal produces non-encapsulated postscript suitable for sending directly to a printer.

solid

The solid option causes the `gif` and `png` terminals to produce output with a non-transparent background, the converse of `transparent`.

transparent

The `transparent` terminal option causes the `gif` and `png` terminals to produce output with a transparent background.

X11_multiwindow

Displays plots on the screen (in X11 windows, using Ghostview). Each time a new plot is generated it appears in a new window, and the old plots remain visible. As many plots as may be desired can be left on the desktop simultaneously.

X11_persist

Displays plots on the screen in X11 windows, using Ghostview. Each time a new plot is generated it appears in a new window, and the old plots remain visible. When PyXPlot is exited the windows remain in place until they are closed manually.

X11_singlewindow

Displays plots on the screen (in X11 windows, using Ghostview). Each time a new plot is generated it replaces the old one, preventing the desktop from becoming flooded with old plots. This terminal is the default when running interactively.

8.27.52   textcolour

```
set textcolour <colour>
```

The `textcolour` setting changes the colour of all text displayed on a plot. For example:

```
set textcolour red
```

causes all text labels, including the labels on graph axes and legends, etc. to be rendered in red. Any of the recognised colour names listed in Section 7.6 can be used, as can a number which indexes into the current palette.

8.27.53   texthalign

```
set texthalign ( left | centre | right )
```

The `texthalign` setting controls how text labels, placed on plots using the `set label` command, and upon multiplots using the `text` command, are justified horizontally with respect to their specified positions. Three options are available:

```
set texthalign left
set texthalign centre
set texthalign right
```

8.27.54 textvalign

```
set textvalign ( bottom | centre | top )
```

The `textvalign` setting controls how text labels, placed on plots using the `set label` command, and upon multiplots using the `text` command, are justified vertically with respect to their specified positions. Three options are available:

```
set textvalign bottom
set textvalign centre
set textvalign top
```

8.27.55 title

```
set title '<title>'
```

The `title` setting can be used to set a title for a plot, to be displayed above it. For example, the command:

```
set title 'foo'
```

would cause a title 'foo' to be displayed above a graph. The easiest way to remove a title, having set one, is via:

```
unset title
```

8.27.56 width

```
set width <value>
```

The `width` setting controls the size of a graph. For example:

```
set width 10
```

sets output to be 10 centimetres in width. For the bitmap terminals (`gif`, `jpg` and `png`) this setting, in conjunction with the `dpi` setting, controls the number of pixels across the final image.

8.27.57 xlabel

```
set xlabel '<text>'
```

The `xlabel` setting controls the label placed on the x-axis (abscissa). For example:

```
set xlabel '$x$'
```

sets the label on the x-axis to 'x'. Labels can be placed on higher axes by inserting their number after the '`x`', for example:

```
set x10label 'foo'
```

would label the tenth x axis.

Similarly, labels can be placed on y-axes as follows:

```
set ylabel '$y$'
set y2label 'foo'
```

8.27.58   xrange

```
set x[<axisnumber>]range '<text>'
```

The `xrange` setting controls the range of values along the x-axes of plots. For function plots, this is also the domain across which the function will be evaluated. For example:

```
set xrange [0:10]
```

sets the first x axis to be between 0 and 10. Higher numbered axes may be referred to be inserting their number after the x; y-axes similarly be replacing the x with a y. Hence:

```
set y23range [-5:5]
```

sets the range of the 23rd y-axis to be between -5 and 5. To request a range to be automatically scaled an asterix can be used. The following command:

```
set xrange [:10][*:*]
```

would set the x-axis to have an upper limit of 10, but does not affect the lower limit; its range remains at its previous setting. The first y-axis is automatically scaled on both its upper and lower limits.

8.27.59   xticdir

```
set (x|y)[<axisnumber>]ticdir (inward|outward|both)
```

The `xticdir` setting can be used to set whether the ticks along the x-axis of a plot point inwards, towards the graph, as by default, or outwards, towards the numeric labels along the axis. They can also be set to point in both directions simultaneously. The syntax for this is as follows:

```
set xticdir inward
set xticdir outward
set xticdir both
```

The same setting can also be made on higher numbered axes, by inserting their numbers after the 'x', for example:

```
set x10ticdir outward
```

Similarly, the 'x' can be substituted with a 'y' to set the directions of ticks on vertical axes:

```
set yticdir inward
set y10ticdir both
```

8.27.60   xtics

```
set [m]x[<axisnumber>]tics
        [axis|border|inward|outward|both]
        [auto
         | [<minimum>,] <increment[, <maximum>]
         | ( '<label>' <position> ... )
        ]
```

The `xtics` option specifies the positions of tick marks on the x-axis (similarly, `ytics` acts on the y-axis). One can specify:

- The axis to modify; if none is specified, then the command acts upon all axes.

- `mxtics` to alter the placement of minor tic marks.

- The keywords `inward`, `outward` and `both`, which alter the directions of the tics. `axis` is an alias for `inward`, `border` for `outward`.

- The `autofreq` keyword restores automatic placement of the tics

- If `minimum`, `increment`, `maximum` are specified, then ticks are placed at evenly spaced intervals between the specified limits. In the case of logarithmic axes, increment is applied multiplicatively.

- The final form allows ticks to be placed on an axis manually with individual labels.

Two examples:

```
set xtics 2 1 5
```

will set tick marks on the x-axis at positions 2, 3, 4 and 5.

```
set x2tics ("a" 2, "b" 3)
```

will set tick marks on the second x-axis at positions 2 and 3 reading 'a' and 'b' respectively.

8.27.61   ylabel

See `xlabel`.

8.27.62   yrange

See `xrange`.

8.27.63   yticdir

See `xticdir`.

8.27.64   ytics

See `xtics`.

8.28   show

```
show ( all | settings | axes | variables | functions |
       <parameter> ...                                  )
```

The `show` command displays the values of PyXPlot's internal parameters. For example:

```
show pointsize
```

will display the current default point size.

Details of the various settings that can be shown can be found under the `set` command; any keyword which can follow the `set` command can also follow the `show` command.

In addition, `show all` shows the configuration state of all aspects of PyXPlot. The command `show settings` shows all of PyXPlot's settings, as distinct from variables, functions and axes. `show axes` shows the configuration of all of PyXPlot's axes. `show variables` lists all of the currently defined variables. And finally, `show functions` lists all of the current user-defined functions.

8.29   spline

```
spline [<range specification>] <function name> '<filename>'
       [index <index specification>] [every <every specification>]
       [using <using specification>]
```

The `spline` command fits a spline to a data file. A special function is created that represents the spline fit and can be used in the same way as any other user-defined function. For example:

```
spline f() 'data.1'
```

would create a function $f(x)$ that is a fit to the data in the file `data.1`. By default, the `spline` command uses the first two columns of a data file in a manner analogous to the plot command. The `index`, `every` and `using` modifiers can be used in the same way as in the `plot` command to select which parts of the data file should be used; see the `datafile` section for more details.

Note that trying to generate splines of multi-valued functions will not, in general, produce useful results.

8.30   tabulate

```
tabulate [<range specification>] ( <expression> | <filename> )
         [index <index specification>] [every <every specification>]
         [using <using specification>] [select <select specifier>]
         [with <output format>]
```

The `tabulate` commands produces a text file containing the values of a function at a set of points. For example, to produce a data file called `sine.dat` with the principal values of the sine function:

```
set output 'sine.dat'
tabulate [-pi:pi] sin(x)
```

The `tabulate` command can also be used to select portions of data files. For example, to select the third, sixth and ninth columns of the data file `data.dat`, but only when the arcsine of the value in the fourth column is positive:

```
set output 'filtered.dat'
tabulate 'data.dat' u 3:6:9 select (asin($4)>0)
```

The format used in each column of the output file is chosen automatically with integers and small numbers treated intelligently to produce output which preserves accuracy, but is also easily human-readable. If desired, however, a format statement may be specified using the `with format` specifier. The syntax for this is similar to that expected by the Python string substitution operator (%)[2]. For example, to tabulate the values of x^2 to very many significant figures one could use:

```
tabulate x**2 with format "%27.20e"
```

If there are not enough columns present in the supplied format statement it will be repeated in a cyclic fashion; e.g. in the example above the single supplied format is used for both columns.

The `index`, `every`, `using` and `select` modifiers work in the same way as for the `plot` command. For example multiple functions may be tabulated into the same file with the `using` modifier:

```
tabulate [0:2*pi] sin(x):cos(x):tan(x) u 1:2:3:4
```

The `samples` setting can be used to control the number of points that are inserted into the data file. If the x-axis is set to be logarithmic then the points at which the functions are evaluated are spaced logarithmically.

8.31   text

```
text '<text string>' [at <x>, <y>] [rotate <angle>]
     [with colour <colour>]
```

The `text` command is used to add blocks of text to a multiplot. An example would be:

```
text 'Hello World!' at 0,2
```

which would render the text 'Hello World!' at position $(0, 2)$, measured in centimetres. The alignment of the text item with respect to this position can be set using the `set texthalign` and `set textvalign` commands.

A rotation angle may optionally be specified after the keyword `rotate` to produce text rotated to any arbitrary angle, measured in degrees counterclockwise. The following example would produce upward-running text:

```
text 'Hello' at 1.5, 3.6 rotate 90
```

By default the text is black; however, an arbitrary colour may be specified using the `with colour` modifier. For example:

---

[2]Note that this operator can also be used within PyXPlot; see Section 2.3 for details.

```
text 'A purple label' at 0, 0 with colour purple
```

would add a purple label at the origin of the multiplot.

Outside of multiplot mode, the text command can be used to produce images consisting simply of one single text item. This can be useful for importing LaTeXed equations as gif images into slideshow programs such as Microsoft Powerpoint which are incapable of producing such neat mathematical notation by themselves.

8.32   undelete

```
undelete <item number>, ...
```

The `undelete` command is part of the multiplot environment; it can be used to reverse the effect of deleting a multiplot item with the `delete` command. The desired item to be undeleted should be identified using the reference number which it was given when it was created; it would have been displayed on the terminal at that time. For example:

```
undelete 1
```

will cause the previously deleted item numbered `1` to reappear.

8.33   unset

```
unset <setting>
```

The `unset` command causes a setting that has been changed using the set command to be returned to its default value. For example:

```
unset linewidth
```

returns the linewidth to its default value.

The list of keywords which can follow the `unset` command are essentially the same as those which can follow the `set` command.

Appendix A

Colour Tables

Figures A.1, A.2 and A.3 show the named colours which PyXPlot recognises. These figures exclude the various shades of grey which PyXPlot recognises, the names of which are as follows, sorted with darkest first:

```
 grey05, grey10, grey15, grey20, grey25, grey30, grey35, grey40,
grey45, grey50, grey55, grey60, grey65, grey70, grey75, grey80,
grey85, grey90, grey95.
```

Apricot	Goldenrod	Periwinkle	Thistle
Aquamarine	Gray	PineGreen	Turquoise
Bittersweet	Green	Plum	Violet
Black	GreenYellow	ProcessBlue	VioletRed
Blue	Grey	Purple	White
BlueGreen	JungleGreen	RawSienna	WildStrawberry
BlueViolet	Lavender	Red	Yellow
BrickRed	LimeGreen	RedOrange	YellowGreen
Brown	Magenta	RedViolet	YellowOrange
BurntOrange	Mahogany	Rhodamine	black
CadetBlue	Maroon	RoyalBlue	white
CarnationPink	Melon	RoyalPurple	
Cerulean	MidnightBlue	RubineRed	
CornflowerBlue	Mulberry	Salmon	
Cyan	NavyBlue	SeaGreen	
Dandelion	OliveGreen	Sepia	
DarkOrchid	Orange	SkyBlue	
Emerald	OrangeRed	SpringGreen	
ForestGreen	Orchid	Tan	
Fuchsia	Peach	TealBlue	

Figure A.1: A list of the named colours which PyXPlot recognises, sorted alphabetically. The numerous shades of grey which it recognises are not shown.

● RawSienna	● Plum	● BlueGreen	● Orange
● Maroon	● Orchid	● TealBlue	● Peach
● BrickRed	● Fuchsia	● Emerald	● RedOrange
● Red	● Purple	● JungleGreen	● Melon
● Brown	● RoyalPurple	● SeaGreen	● Bittersweet
● Mahogany	● Violet	● PineGreen	White
● Sepia	● BlueViolet	● OliveGreen	white
● Salmon	● Blue	● ForestGreen	● Gray
● OrangeRed	● Periwinkle	● Green	● Grey
● WildStrawberry	● CadetBlue	● YellowGreen	● black
● RubineRed	● NavyBlue	● LimeGreen	● Black
● Lavender	● RoyalBlue	● SpringGreen	
● Rhodamine	● MidnightBlue	● GreenYellow	
● VioletRed	● CornflowerBlue	● Yellow	
● Magenta	● Cerulean	● Goldenrod	
● CarnationPink	● ProcessBlue	● Dandelion	
● RedViolet	● Cyan	● YellowOrange	
● Thistle	● SkyBlue	● BurntOrange	
● DarkOrchid	● Turquoise	● Apricot	
● Mulberry	● Aquamarine	● Tan	

Figure A.2: A list of the named colours which PyXPlot recognises, sorted by hue. The numerous shades of grey which it recognises are not shown.
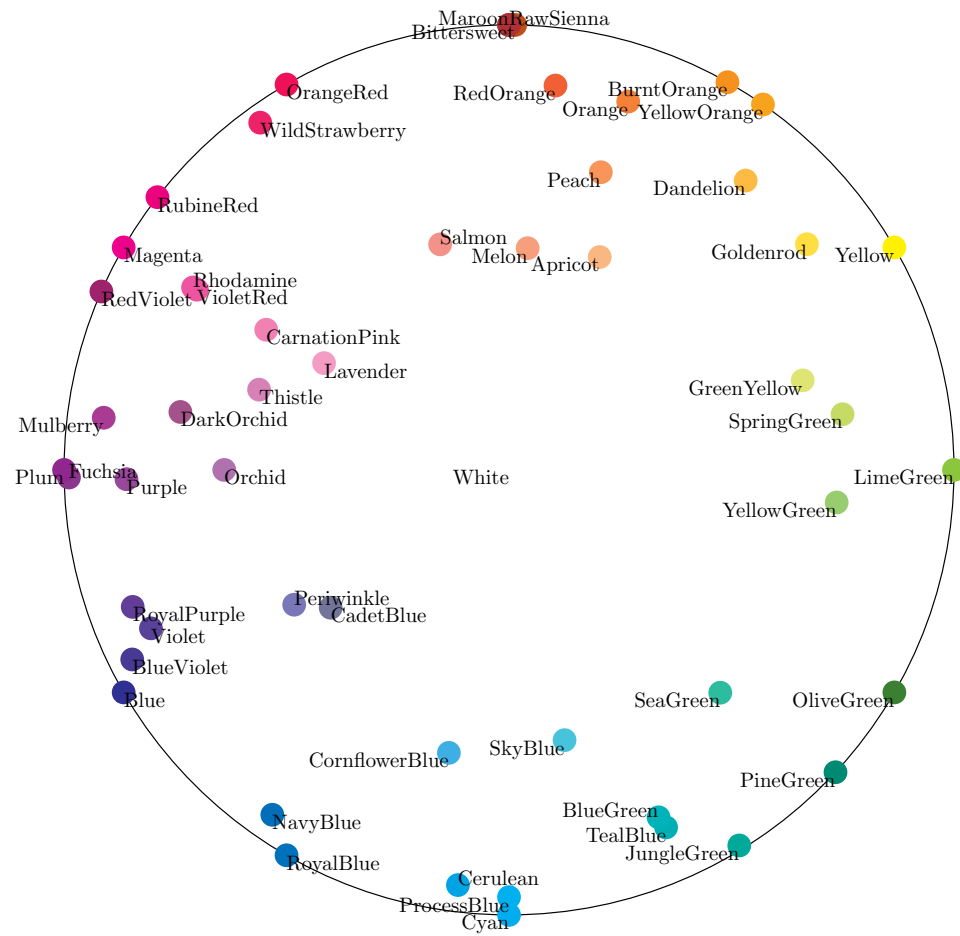
Figure A.3: The named colours which PyXPlot recognises, arranged in HSB colour space, with the brightness axis orientated into the page. Some colours are not shown as they lie too close to others.

Appendix B

Line and Point Types

The table below shows the appearance of each numbered line and point type:

×	Point type 1	———	Line type 1
+	Point type 2	– – – – –	Line type 2
∗	Point type 3	· · · · · · · · · ·	Line type 3
□	Point type 4	· – · – · – ·	Line type 4
△	Point type 5	– ·· – ··	Line type 5
○	Point type 6	–· ·–· ·	Line type 6
■	Point type 7	– – – – –	Line type 7
■	Point type 8	– – –	Line type 8
▲	Point type 9		
●	Point type 10		
◆	Point type 11		
⊤	Point type 12		
⊥	Point type 13		

Appendix C

Other Applications of PyXPlot

In this chapter, we present a short cookbook, describing a few applications which we have found for PyXPlot which are not directly related to the plotting of graphs.

C.1 Conversion of JPEG Images to Postscript

Users of the LaTeX typesetting system will have experienced frustration if they have ever tried to incorporate bitmap images – for example, those in jpeg format – into LaTeX documents. Whilst LaTeX's `includegraphics` command allows for the easy incorporation of encapsulated postscript images into documents, bitmap images must be converted into postscript before they can be imported. ImageMagick's `convert` command can perform such a conversion, but it does not produce efficient postscript, and the resulting postscript file sizes are often excessively large. PyXPlot's `jpeg` command can perform much more efficient conversion:

```
set output image.eps
jpeg 'image.jpg' width 10
```

C.2 Inserting Equations in Powerpoint Presentations

The two tools most commonly used for presenting talks – Microsoft *Powerpoint* and OpenOffice *Impress* – have no facility for importing text rendered in LaTeX into slides. This is a frustration for those who work in mathematical disciplines, where it is necessary for talks to include equations. More generally, it is a frustration for anyone who works in a field with notation which makes use of non-standard characters. *Powerpoint* does include its

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own *Equation Editor*, but its output is considerably less professional than that produced by LaTeX.

It is possible to import graphic images into *Powerpoint*, but it cannot read images in postscript format, the format in which LaTeX produces its output.

PyXPlot's `gif` and `png` terminals provide a fix for this problem, as the following example demonstrates:

```
set term transparent noantialias gif ; set dpi 300
set output 'equation.gif' ; set multiplot

# Render the Planck blackbody formula in LaTeX
set textcolour yellow
text '$B_\nu = \frac{8\pi h}{c^3} \
\frac{\nu^3}{\exp \left( h\nu / kT \right) -1 }$' at 0,0
text 'The Planck Blackbody Formula:' at 0 , 0.75
```

The result is a `gif` image of the desired equation, with yellow text on a transparent background. This can readily be imported into *Powerpoint* and re-scaled to the desired size.

C.3   Delivering Talks in PyXPlot

Going one step further, PyXPlot can be used as a stand-alone tool for designing slides for talks; it has several advantages over other presentation tools. All of the text which is placed on slides is rendered neatly in LaTeX. Images can be placed on slides using the `jpeg` and `eps` commands, and placed at any arbitrary co-ordinate position on the slide. In comparison with programs such as Microsoft *Powerpoint* and OpenOffice *Impress*, the text looks much neater, especially if equations or unusual characters are required. In comparison with TeX-based programs such as FoilTeX, it is much easier to incorporate images around text to create colourful slides which will keep an audience attentive.

As an additional advantage, graphs can be plotted within the scripts describing each slide, directly from data files in your local filesystem. If you receive new data shortly before giving a talk, it is a simple matter to re-run the PyXPlot scripts and your slides will automatically pick up the new data files.

Below, we outline our recipe for designing slides in PyXPlot. There are many steps, but they do not take much time; many simply involve pasting text into various files. Readers of the printed version of the manual may find it easier to copy these files from the HTML version of this manual on the PyXPlot website.

C.3.1 Setting up Infrastructure

First, a bit of infrastructure needs to be set up. Note that once this has been done for one talk, the infrastructure can be copied directly from a previous talk.

1. Make a new directory in which to put your talk:

   ```
   mkdir my_talk
   cd my_talk
   ```

2. Make a directory into which you will put the PyXPlot scripts for your individual slides:

   ```
   mkdir scripts
   ```

3. Make a directory into which you will put any graphic images which you want to put into your talk to make it look pretty:

   ```
   mkdir images
   ```

4. Make a directory into which PyXPlot will put graphic images of your slides:

   ```
   mkdir slides
   ```

5. Design a background for your slides. Open a paint programme such as the `gimp`, create a new image which measures 1024×768 pixels, and fill it with colour. My preference tends to be for a blue colour gradient, running from bright blue at the top to dark blue at the bottom, but you may be more inventive than me. You may wish to add institutional and/or project logos in the corners. Alternatively, you can download a ready-made background image from the PyXPlot website: `http://foo`. You should store this image as `images/background.jpg`.

6. We need a simple PyXPlot script to set up a slide template. Paste the following text into the file `scripts/slide_init`; there's a bit of black magic in the `arrow` commands in this script which it isn't necessary to understand at this stage:

   ```
   scale = 1.25        ; inch = 2.54 # cm
   width = 10.24*scale ; height =  7.68*scale
   x = width/100.0     ; y = height/100.0
   set term gif ; set dpi (1024.0/width) * inch
   set multiplot ; set nodisplay
   ```

```
set texthalign centre ; set textvalign centre
set textcolour yellow
jpeg "images/background.jpg" width width
arrow -x* 25,-y* 25 to -x* 25, y*125 with nohead
arrow -x* 25, y*125 to  x*125, y*125 with nohead
arrow  x*125, y*125 to  x*125,-y* 25 with nohead
arrow  x*125,-y* 25 to -x* 25,-y* 25 with nohead
```

7. We also need a simple PyXPlot script to round off each slide. Paste the following text into the file `scripts/slide_finish`:

```
set display ; refresh
```

8. Paste the following text into the file `compile`. This is a simple shell script which instructs `pyxplot_watch` to compile your slides using PyXPlot every time you edit any of the them:

```
#!/bin/bash
pyxplot_watch --verbose scripts/0\*
```

9. Paste the following text into the file `make_slides`. This is a simple shell script which crops your slides to measure exactly 1024×768 pixels, cropping any text boxes which may go off the side of them. It links up with the black magic of Step 6:

```
#!/bin/bash
mkdir -p slides_cropped
for all in slides/*.gif ; do
convert $all -crop 1024x768+261+198 `echo $all | \
sed 's@slides@slides_cropped@' | sed 's@gif@jpg@'`
done
```

10. Make the scripts `compile` and `make_slides` executable:

```
chmod 755 compile make_slides
```

C.3.2   Writing A Short Example Talk

The infrastructure is now completely set up, and you are ready to start designing slides. As an example, we will now design a short talk which might be presented to by the Principal Conductor of the *International Feline Chamber Chorus*.

1. Run the script `compile` and leave it running in the background. PyX-Plot will then re-run the scripts describing your slides whenever you edit them.

2. As an example, we will now make a title slide. Paste the following script into the file `scripts/0001`:

```
set output 'slides/0001.gif'
load 'scripts/slide_init'

text '\parbox[t]{10cm}{\center \LARGE \bf \
  An Experiment in the Training \\ \
  of Cats to Sing Bach Chorales \
} ' at x*50, y*75
text '\Large \bf Sir Archibald Dribbles' at x*50, y*45
text '\parbox[t]{9cm}{\center \
  Principal Conductor, \\ \
  International Feline Chamber Chorus \
} ' at x*50, y*38
text 'Annual Lecture, 1st January 2008' at x*50, y*22

load 'scripts/slide_finish'
```

Note that the variables x and y are defined to be 1 per cent of the width and height of your slides respectively, such that the bottom-left of each slide is at $(0, 0)$ and the top-right of each slide is at $(100 * x, 100 * y)$.

3. Next we will make a second slide with a series of bullet points. Paste the following script into the file `scripts/0002`:

```
set output 'slides/0002.gif'
load 'scripts/slide_init'

text '\Large \textbf{Talk Overview}' at x*50, y*92
text "\parbox[t]{9cm}{\begin{itemize} \
 \item Teaching cats to use their head voices. \
 \item The Suzuki Method, as adapted to cats. \
 \item Case Study I: {\it Wachet auf, das Katzenfutter \
                           ist angerichtet!}, BWV~140. \
 \item Rhythmical Devices: Synchronised Purring. \
 \item Case Study II: {\it Was eine Katze will, das \
                           g'scheh' allzeit}, BWV~92. \
 \item Conclusion. \
 \end{itemize} \
} " at x*50 , y*60

set textcol cyan
text '{\bf With thanks to my collaborator, \
```

```
                    Pebbles Poofslop.}' at x*50,y*15

    load 'scripts/slide_finish'
```

4. Finally, we will make a third slide with a graph on it. Paste the following script into the file `scripts/0003`:

```
    set output 'slides/0003.gif'
    load 'scripts/slide_init'

    text '\Large \bf The Results of Our Model' at x*50, y*92
    set axescolour yellow ; set nogrid
    set origin x*17.5, y*20 ; set width x*70
    set xrange [0.01:0.7]
    set xlabel '$x$'
    set yrange [0.01:0.7]
    set ylabel '$f(x)$'
    set palette Red, Green, Orange, Purple

    set key top left
    plot x t 'Model 1', exp(x)-1 t 'Model 2', \
         log(x+1) t 'Model 3', sin(x) t 'Model 4'

    load 'scripts/slide_finish'
```

5. To view your slides, run the script `make_slides`. Afterwards, you will find your slides as a series of 1024×768 pixel jpeg images in the directory `slides_cropped`. If you have the *Quick Image Viewer* (`qiv`) installed, then you can view them as follows:

```
    qiv slides_cropped/*
```

If you're in a hurry, you can skip the step of running the script `make_slides` and view your slides as images in the `slides` directory, but note that the slides in here may not be properly cropped. This approach is generally preferable when viewing your slides in a semi-live fashion as you are editing them.

6. If you'd like to make the text on your slides larger or smaller, you can do so by varying the `scale` parameter in the file `scripts/slide_init`.

The three slides which we have designed can been seen in Figures **??**, **??** and **??**.

C.3.3 Delivering your Talk

There are two straightforward ways in which you can give your talk. The quickest way is simply to use the *Quick Image Viewer* (`qiv`):

```
qiv slides_cropped/*
```

Press the left mouse button to move forward through your talk, and the right mouse button to go back a slide.

This method does lack some of the niceties of Microsoft *Powerpoint* – for example, the ability to jump to any arbitrary slide number, compatibility with wireless remote controls to advance your slides, and the ability to use animated slide transitions. It may be preferably, therefore, to paste the jpeg images of your slides into a *Powerpoint* or OpenOffice *Impress* presentation before you give your talk.

Appendix D

The `fit` Command: Mathematical Details

In this section, the mathematical details of the workings of the `fit` command are described. This may be of interest in diagnosing its limitations, and also in understanding the various quantities that it outputs after a fit is found. This discussion must necessarily be a rather brief treatment of a large subject; for a fuller account, the reader is referred to D.S. Sivia's *Data Analysis: A Bayesian Tutorial.*

D.1   Notation

I shall assume that we have some function $f()$, which takes n_x parameters, $x_0...x_{n_x-1}$, the set of which may collectively be written as the vector $\mathbf{x}$. We are supplied a datafile, containing a number n_d of datapoints, each consisting of a set of values for each of the n_x parameters, and one for the value which we are seeking to make $f(\mathbf{x})$ match. I shall call of parameter values for the ith datapoint $\mathbf{x}_i$, and the corresponding value which we are trying to match f_i. The datafile may contain error estimates for the values f_i, which I shall denote σ_i. If these are not supplied, then I shall consider these quantities to be unknown, and equal to some constant σ_{data}.

Finally, I assume that there are n_u coefficients within the function $f()$ that we are able to vary, corresponding to those variable names listed after the `via` statement in the `fit` command. I shall call these coefficients $u_0...u_{n_u-1}$, and refer to them collectively as $\mathbf{u}$.

I model the values f_i in the supplied datafile as being noisy Gaussian-distributed observations of the true function $f()$, and within this framework, seek to find that vector of values $\mathbf{u}$ which is most probable, given these observations. The probability of any given $\mathbf{u}$ is written $\mathrm{P}\left(\mathbf{u}|\left\{\mathbf{x}_i, f_i, \sigma_i\right\}\right)$.

D.2   The Probability Density Function

Bayes' Theorem states that:

$$P\left(\mathbf{u}|\left\{\mathbf{x}_i, f_i, \sigma_i\right\}\right) = \frac{P\left(\left\{f_i\right\}|\mathbf{u}, \left\{\mathbf{x}_i, \sigma_i\right\}\right) P\left(\mathbf{u}|\left\{\mathbf{x}_i, \sigma_i\right\}\right)}{P\left(\left\{f_i\right\}|\left\{\mathbf{x}_i, \sigma_i\right\}\right)} \tag{D.1}$$

Since we are only seeking to maximise the quantity on the left, and the denominator, termed the Bayesian *evidence*, is independent of $\mathbf{u}$, we can neglect it and replace the equality sign with a proportionality sign. Furthermore, if we assume a uniform prior, that is, we assume that we have no prior knowledge to bias us towards certain more favoured values of $\mathbf{u}$, then $P\left(\mathbf{u}\right)$ is also a constant which can be neglected. We conclude that maximising $P\left(\mathbf{u}|\left\{\mathbf{x}_i, f_i, \sigma_i\right\}\right)$ is equivalent to maximising $P\left(\left\{f_i\right\}|\mathbf{u}, \left\{\mathbf{x}_i, \sigma_i\right\}\right)$.

Since we are assuming f_i to be Gaussian-distributed observations of the true function $f()$, this latter probability can be written as a product of n_{d} Gaussian distributions:

$$P\left(\left\{f_i\right\}|\mathbf{u}, \left\{\mathbf{x}_i, \sigma_i\right\}\right) = \prod_{i=0}^{n_{\mathrm{d}}-1} \frac{1}{\sigma_i\sqrt{2\pi}} \exp\left(\frac{-\left[f_i - f_{\mathbf{u}}(\mathbf{x}_i)\right]^2}{2\sigma_i^2}\right) \tag{D.2}$$

The product in this equation can be converted into a more computationally workable sum by taking the logarithm of both sides. Since logarithms are monotonically increasing functions, maximising a probability is equivalent to maximising its logarithm. We may write the logarithm L of $P\left(\mathbf{u}|\left\{\mathbf{x}_i, f_i, \sigma_i\right\}\right)$ as:

$$L = \sum_{i=0}^{n_{\mathrm{d}}-1} \left(\frac{-\left[f_i - f_{\mathbf{u}}(\mathbf{x}_i)\right]^2}{2\sigma_i^2}\right) + k \tag{D.3}$$

where k is some constant which does not affect the maximisation process. It is this quantity, the familiar sum-of-square-residuals, that we numerically maximise to find our best-fitting set of parameters, which I shall refer to from here on as $\mathbf{u}^0$.

D.3   Estimating the Error in $\mathbf{u}^0$

To estimate the error in the best-fitting parameter values that we find, we assume $P\left(\mathbf{u}|\left\{\mathbf{x}_i, f_i, \sigma_i\right\}\right)$ to be approximated by an n_{u}-dimensional Gaussian distribution around $\mathbf{u}^0$. Taking a Taylor expansion of $L(\mathbf{u})$ about $\mathbf{u}^0$, we can write:

$$L(\mathbf{u}) = L(\mathbf{u}^0) + \underbrace{\sum_{i=0}^{n_{\mathrm{u}}-1} \left(u_i - u_i^0\right) \left.\frac{\partial L}{\partial u_i}\right|_{\mathbf{u}^0}}_{\text{Zero at } \mathbf{u}^0 \text{ by definition}} + \tag{D.4}$$

$$\sum_{i=0}^{n_{\mathrm{u}}-1} \sum_{j=0}^{n_{\mathrm{u}}-1} \frac{\left(u_i - u_i^0\right)\left(u_j - u_j^0\right)}{2} \left.\frac{\partial^2 L}{\partial u_i \partial u_j}\right|_{\mathbf{u}^0} + \mathcal{O}\left(\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{u}^0\right)^3$$

Since the logarithm of a Gaussian distribution is a parabola, the quadratic terms in the above expansion encode the Gaussian component of the probability distribution $\mathrm{P}\left(\mathbf{u} \middle| \{\mathbf{x}_i, f_i, \sigma_i\}\right)$ about $\mathbf{u}^0$.[1] We may write the sum of these terms, which we denote Q, in matrix form:

$$Q = \frac{1}{2} \left(\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{u}^0\right)^{\mathbf{T}} \mathbf{A} \left(\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{u}^0\right) \tag{D.5}$$

where the superscript $\mathbf{T}$ represents the transpose of the vector displacement from $\mathbf{u}^0$, and $\mathbf{A}$ is the Hessian matrix of L, given by:

$$A_{ij} = \nabla\nabla L = \left.\frac{\partial^2 L}{\partial u_i \partial u_j}\right|_{\mathbf{u}^0} \tag{D.6}$$

This is the Hessian matrix which is output by the `fit` command. In general, an n_{u}-dimensional Gaussian distribution such as that given by equation (D.4) yields elliptical contours of equiprobability in parameter space, whose principal axes need not be aligned with our chosen co-ordinate axes – the variables $u_0...u_{n_u-1}$. The eigenvectors $\mathbf{e}_i$ of $\mathbf{A}$ are the principal axes of these ellipses, and the corresponding eigenvalues λ_i equal $1/\sigma_i^2$, where σ_i is the standard deviation of the probability density function along the direction of these axes.

This can be visualised by imagining that we diagonalise $\mathbf{A}$, and expand equation (D.5) in our diagonal basis. The resulting expression for L is a sum of square terms; the cross terms vanish in this basis by definition. The equations of the equiprobability contours become the equations of ellipses:

$$Q = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=0}^{n_{\mathrm{u}}-1} A_{ii} \left(u_i - u_i^0\right)^2 = k \tag{D.7}$$

where k is some constant. By comparison with the equation for the logarithm of a Gaussian distribution, we can associate A_{ii} with $-1/\sigma_i^2$ in our eigenvector basis.

---

[1] The use of this is called *Gauss' Method*. Higher order terms in the expansion represent any non-Gaussianity in the probability distribution, which we neglect. See MacKay, D.J.C., *Information Theory, Inference and Learning Algorithms*, CUP (2003).

The problem of evaluating the standard deviations of our variables u_i is more complicated, however, as we are attempting to evaluate the width of these elliptical equiprobability contours in directions which are, in general, not aligned with their principal axes. To achieve this, we first convert our Hessian matrix into a covariance matrix.

D.4   The Covariance Matrix

The terms of the covariance matrix V_{ij} are defined by:

$$V_{ij} = \left\langle \left(u_i - u_i^0\right)\left(u_j - u_j^0\right)\right\rangle \tag{D.8}$$

Its leading diagonal terms may be recognised as equalling the variances of each of our n_{u} variables; its cross terms measure the correlation between the variables. If a component $V_{ij} > 0$, it implies that higher estimates of the coefficient u_i make higher estimates of u_j more favourable also; if $V_{ij} < 0$, the converse is true.

It is a standard statistical result that $\mathbf{V} = (-\mathbf{A})^{-1}$. In the remainder of this section we prove this; readers who are willing to accept this may skip onto Section D.5.

Using Δu_i to denote $\left(u_i - u_i^0\right)$, we may proceed by rewriting equation (D.8) as:

$$
\begin{aligned}
V_{ij} &= \int \cdots \int_{u_i=-\infty}^{\infty} \Delta u_i \Delta u_j \mathrm{P}\left(\mathbf{u}\,|\,\{\mathbf{x}_i, f_i, \sigma_i\}\right) \mathrm{d}^{n_{\mathrm{u}}}\mathbf{u} \\
&= \frac{\int \cdots \int_{u_i=-\infty}^{\infty} \Delta u_i \Delta u_j \exp(-Q)\, \mathrm{d}^{n_{\mathrm{u}}}\mathbf{u}}{\int \cdots \int_{u_i=-\infty}^{\infty} \exp(-Q)\, \mathrm{d}^{n_{\mathrm{u}}}\mathbf{u}}
\end{aligned} \tag{D.9}
$$

The normalisation factor in the denominator of this expression, which we denote as Z, the *partition function*, may be evaluated by n_{u}-dimensional Gaussian integration, and is a standard result:

$$
\begin{aligned}
Z &= \int \cdots \int_{u_i=-\infty}^{\infty} \exp\left(\frac{1}{2}\Delta\mathbf{u}^{\mathbf{T}}\mathbf{A}\Delta\mathbf{u}\right) \mathrm{d}^{n_{\mathrm{u}}}\mathbf{u} \\
&= \frac{(2\pi)^{n_{\mathrm{u}}/2}}{\mathrm{Det}(-\mathbf{A})}
\end{aligned} \tag{D.10}
$$

Differentiating $\log_e(Z)$ with respect of any given component of the Hessian matrix A_{ij} yields:

$$-2\frac{\partial}{\partial A_{ij}}\left[\log_e(Z)\right] = \frac{1}{Z}\int \cdots \int_{u_i=-\infty}^{\infty} \Delta u_i \Delta u_j \exp(-Q)\, \mathrm{d}^{n_{\mathrm{u}}}\mathbf{u} \tag{D.11}$$

which we may identify as equalling V_{ij}:

$$
\begin{aligned}
V_{ij} &= -2\frac{\partial}{\partial A_{ij}}\left[\log_e(Z)\right] & \text{(D.12)} \\
&= -2\frac{\partial}{\partial A_{ij}}\left[\log_e((2\pi)^{n_u/2}) - \log_e(\text{Det}(-\mathbf{A}))\right] \\
&= 2\frac{\partial}{\partial A_{ij}}\left[\log_e(\text{Det}(-\mathbf{A}))\right]
\end{aligned}
$$

This expression may be simplified by recalling that the determinant of a matrix is equal to the scalar product of any of its rows with its cofactors, yielding the result:

$$
\frac{\partial}{\partial A_{ij}}\left[\text{Det}(-\mathbf{A})\right] = -a_{ij} \tag{D.13}
$$

where a_{ij} is the cofactor of A_{ij}. Substituting this into equation (D.12) yields:

$$
V_{ij} = \frac{-a_{ij}}{\text{Det}(-\mathbf{A})} \tag{D.14}
$$

Recalling that the adjoint $\mathbf{A}^\dagger$ of the Hessian matrix is the matrix of cofactors of its transpose, and that $\mathbf{A}$ is symmetric, we may write:

$$
V_{ij} = \frac{-\mathbf{A}^\dagger}{\text{Det}(-\mathbf{A})} \equiv (-\mathbf{A})^{-1} \tag{D.15}
$$

which proves the result stated earlier.

D.5 The Correlation Matrix

Having evaluated the covariance matrix, we may straightforwardly find the standard deviations in each of our variables, by taking the square roots of the terms along its leading diagonal. For datafiles where the user does not specify the standard deviations σ_i in each value f_i, the task is not quite complete, as the Hessian matrix depends critically upon these uncertainties, even if they are assumed the same for all of our f_i. This point is returned to in Section D.6.

The correlation matrix $\mathbf{C}$, whose terms are given by:

$$
C_{ij} = \frac{V_{ij}}{\sigma_i \sigma_j} \tag{D.16}
$$

may be considered a more user-friendly version of the covariance matrix for inspecting the correlation between parameters. The leading diagonal terms are all clearly equal unity by construction. The cross terms lie in the range $-1 \le C_{ij} \le 1$, the upper limit of this range representing perfect correlation between parameters, and the lower limit perfect anti-correlation.

D.6   Finding σ_i

Throughout the preceding sections, the uncertainties in the supplied target values f_i have been denoted σ_i (see Section D.1). The user has the option of supplying these in the source datafile, in which case the provisions of the previous sections are now complete; both best-estimate parameter values and their uncertainties can be calculated. The user may also, however, leave the uncertainties in f_i unstated, in which case, as described in Section D.1, we assume all of the data values to have a common uncertainty σ_{data}, which is an unknown.

In this case, where $\sigma_i = \sigma_{\mathrm{data}} \, \forall \, i$, the best fitting parameter values are independent of σ_{data}, but the same is not true of the uncertainties in these values, as the terms of the Hessian matrix do depend upon σ_{data}. We must therefore undertake a further calculation to find the most probable value of σ_{data}, given the data. This is achieved by maximising $\mathrm{P}\left(\sigma_{\mathrm{data}} | \{\mathbf{x}_i, f_i\}\right)$. Returning once again to Bayes' Theorem, we can write:

$$\mathrm{P}\left(\sigma_{\mathrm{data}} | \{\mathbf{x}_i, f_i\}\right) = \frac{\mathrm{P}\left(\{f_i\} | \sigma_{\mathrm{data}}, \{\mathbf{x}_i\}\right) \mathrm{P}\left(\sigma_{\mathrm{data}} | \{\mathbf{x}_i\}\right)}{\mathrm{P}\left(\{f_i\} | \{\mathbf{x}_i\}\right)} \tag{D.17}$$

As before, we neglect the denominator, which has no effect upon the maximisation problem, and assume a uniform prior $\mathrm{P}\left(\sigma_{\mathrm{data}} | \{\mathbf{x}_i\}\right)$. This reduces the problem to the maximisation of $\mathrm{P}\left(\{f_i\} | \sigma_{\mathrm{data}}, \{\mathbf{x}_i\}\right)$, which we may write as a marginalised probability distribution over $\mathbf{u}$:

$$\mathrm{P}\left(\{f_i\} | \sigma_{\mathrm{data}}, \{\mathbf{x}_i\}\right) = \int \cdots \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \mathrm{P}\left(\{f_i\} | \sigma_{\mathrm{data}}, \{\mathbf{x}_i\}, \mathbf{u}\right) \times \quad \text{(D.18)}$$
$$\mathrm{P}\left(\mathbf{u} | \sigma_{\mathrm{data}}, \{\mathbf{x}_i\}\right) \mathrm{d}^{n_{\mathrm{u}}}\mathbf{u}$$

Assuming a uniform prior for $\mathbf{u}$, we may neglect the latter term in the integral, but even with this assumption, the integral is not generally tractable, as $\mathrm{P}\left(\{f_i\} | \sigma_{\mathrm{data}}, \{\mathbf{x}_i\}, \{\mathbf{u}_i\}\right)$ may well be multimodal in form. However, if we neglect such possibilities, and assume this probability distribution to be approximate a Gaussian *globally*, we can make use of the standard result for an n_{u}-dimensional Gaussian integral:

$$\int \cdots \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \exp\left(\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{u}^{\mathbf{T}}\mathbf{A}\mathbf{u}\right) \mathrm{d}^{n_{\mathrm{u}}}\mathbf{u} = \frac{(2\pi)^{n_{\mathrm{u}}/2}}{\sqrt{\mathrm{Det}\left(-\mathbf{A}\right)}} \tag{D.19}$$

We may thus approximate equation (D.18) as:

$$\mathrm{P}\left(\{f_i\} | \sigma_{\mathrm{data}}, \{\mathbf{x}_i\}\right) \quad \approx \quad \mathrm{P}\left(\{f_i\} | \sigma_{\mathrm{data}}, \{\mathbf{x}_i\}, \mathbf{u}^0\right) \times \quad \text{(D.20)}$$
$$\mathrm{P}\left(\mathbf{u}^0 | \sigma_{\mathrm{data}}, \{\mathbf{x}_i, f_i\}\right) \frac{(2\pi)^{n_{\mathrm{u}}/2}}{\sqrt{\mathrm{Det}\left(-\mathbf{A}\right)}}$$

As in Section D.2, it is numerically easier to maximise this quantity via its logarithm, which we denote L_2, and can write as:

$$
\begin{aligned}
L_2 \;=\; & \sum_{i=0}^{n_{\mathrm{d}}-1} \left(\frac{-\left[f_i - f_{\mathbf{u}^0}(\mathbf{x}_i)\right]^2}{2\sigma_{\mathrm{data}}^2} - \log_e\left(2\pi\sqrt{\sigma_{\mathrm{data}}}\right) \right) + \qquad \text{(D.21)} \\
& \log_e\left(\frac{(2\pi)^{n_{\mathrm{u}}/2}}{\sqrt{\mathrm{Det}\left(-\mathbf{A}\right)}} \right)
\end{aligned}
$$

This quantity is maximised numerically, a process simplified by the fact that $\mathbf{u}^0$ is independent of σ_{data}.

Appendix E

ChangeLog

2009 Nov 17: PyXPlot 0.7.1

Summary:

This release has no major new features, but fixes several serious bugs in version 0.7.0.

Details:

- The `exec` command did not work in PyXPlot 0.7.0; this issue has been resolved.

- The `xyerrorrange` plot style did not work in PyXPlot 0.7.0; this issue has been resolved.

- PyXPlot 0.7.0 produces large numbers of python deprecation error messages when run under python 2.6; the code has been updated to remove references to deprecated python functions.

Details − Change of System Requirements:

- In order to fix some of the bugs listed above, it has been necessary to fix bugs in the PyX graphics library as well as those in PyXPlot. As a result, and to ensure that these bugfixes reach users as quickly as possible, we have opted to ship our own modified version of PyX 0.10, called dcfPyX with PyXPlot.

2008 Oct 14: PyXPlot 0.7.0

Summary:

Third PyXPlot beta-release. The code has undergone significant streamlining, and now runs approximately twice as fast as version 0.6.3 when handling large datafiles. Memory usage has also been radically reduced. Two new

data processing commands have been introduced. The `tabulate` command can be used to produce textual datafiles, allowing the user to read data in from files, apply some analysis, and then write the processed data back to file. The `histogram` command can be used to estimate the frequency densities of sets of data points, either by binning them into a bar chart, or by fitting a functional form to their frequency density.

Details – New and Extended Commands:

- `tabulate`

- `histogram`

- `set label` and `text` commands extended to allow a colour to be specified.

Details – API changes

- `diff_dx()` and `int_dx()` functions – the function to be differentiated or integrated must now be placed in quotation marks.

Details – Change of System Requirements:

- Requirement of PyX version 0.9 has been updated to PyX version 0.10. Note that new versions of the PyX graphics library are not generally backwardly compatible.

2007 Feb 26: PyXPlot 0.6.3

Summary:

Second PyXPlot beta-release. The most significant change is the introduction of a new command-line parser, with greatly improved handling of complex expressions and much more meaningful syntax error messages. Multiplatform compatibility has also been massively improved, and dependencies loosened. A small number of new commands have been added; most notable among them are the `jpeg` and `eps` commands, which embed images in multiplots.

Details – New and Extended Commands:

- `jpeg`

- `eps`

- `set xtics` and `set mxtics`

- `text` and `set label` commands extended to allow text rotation.

- `set log` command extended to allow the use of logarithms with bases other than 10.

- `set preamble`

- `set term enlarge | noenlarge`

- `set term pdf`

- `set term x11_persist`

Details – Eased System Requirements:

- Requirement on Python 2.4 minimum eased to version 2.3 minimum.

- Requirements on scipy and readline eased; PyXPlot will now work in reduced form when they are absent, though they are still strongly recommended.

- dvips and ghostscript are no longer required.

Details – Removed Commands:

Due to a general refinement of PyXPlot's API, some of the less sensible pieces of syntax from Version 0.5 are no longer supported. The author apologises for any inconvenience caused.

- The `delete_arrow`, `delete_text`, `move_text`, `undelete_arrow` and `undelete_text` commands have been removed from the PyXPlot API. The `move`, `delete` and `undelete` commands should now be used to act upon all types of multiplot objects.

- The `set terminal` command no longer accepts the `enhanced` and `noenhanced` modifiers. The `postscript` and `eps` terminals should be used instead.

- The `select` modifier, used after the `plot`, `replot`, `fit` and `spline` command can now only be used once; to specify multiple `select` criteria, use the `and` logical operator.

2006 Sep 09: PyXPlot 0.5.8

First beta-release.

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