

CircuitPython-GFX Reference

Introduction

This document provides users of the CircuitPython-GFX module: CPTGFX.py a functional reference for the user interface. The CPTGFX.py (hereafter called GFX) module is a Python language port of the Adafruit_GFX.cpp module which supports various TFT color displays from within the Arduino environment – that is, programs developed in C/C++. However, with the introduction of Circuitpython, from Adafruit, a Python version is sorely required because the user community expects as much. However, my experience after having purchased the Adafruit ItsyBitsy M4 board and the ILI9341 TFT Color Display (2.4" 240 X 320 resolution), was that there really wasn't support for anything but basic text display using a woefully small 5 X 8 default font that couldn't be changed. Also, the graphic functions we came to expect, like drawing circle, triangles and rectangles was, likewise, missing. So, I reached out to Adafruit on their forum and was told that support was "in the works" but no timeline was provided, nor was the ILI9341 or ST7735 displays high on the priority list.

Feeling like I was hyped into getting excited about the prospect of programming my M4 in Python only to then find out that I couldn't do much more than print to the serial port led me to take the bull by the horns and write this module. Admittedly, having more integrated support for graphics in Circuitpython and having the ability to utilize the BusIO facility is better because it's much faster; however, having "something" is better than nothing even if it's a little slower. GFX (CPTGFX.py) is my contribution to the community that allows the users of the ILI9341 and ST7735 displays to output graphics and text (larger than 5 X 8) via converted TTF fonts. This module should support any display that is a part of the Adafruit.rgb.display module. It uses the "write pixel" low level function for output. I also found that in order to output larger text, I had to either create a new, larger version of the font5x8.bin module or take a different approach and support converted TTF fonts via a "fontconvert" application that would output a font file compatible with Python (the original fontconvert program was intended to output a c/c++ .h file which was included. I modified the fontconvert.cpp program to output a Python compatible file, that is, a .py module which would be imported into the users program. So, CPTGFX.py and PYFontconvert (this is a directory name only...I kept the same program name: fontconvert) were born. In the process, I learned a bit about Freetype, refreshed my c++ knowledge, expanded my Python knowledge and learned a little more about Microsoft's Visual Studio. I built my fontconvert program using VS2010, because I was more familiar with it than with developing programs in the **ix environment – makefiles, cmakefiles, etc.

So, let's get started with the original purpose of this document and describe the user interface by listing each available function provided. Functions are listed in alphabetical order making it easier to find what's required. However, I first describe how to perform basic setup in the Python program.

Include your converted font file and CPTGFX modules

In order to make your converted font file available to display text, you must have a statement like the following near the top of your Python program:

```
import CPtGFX as CPtGFX
import ariali12pt7b as ariali12pt7b
from Adafruit_rgb_display import ili9341 as ili9341, 65
import busio
import board
import time
import digitalio
cs = digitalio.DigitalInOut(board.D2)
dc = digitalio.DigitalInOut(board.D7)
# Setup hardware SPI at 32mhz on ESP8266 MicroPython.
spi = busio.SPI(clock=board.SCK, MOSI=board.MOSI,
MISO=board.MISO)
# Setup ILI9341 display using TFT CS & DC pins.
display = ili9341.ILI9341(spi, cs=cs, dc=dc)
gfx = CPtGFX.GFX(240, 320, pixel=display.pixel,
font_name=ariali12pt7b)
```

As you can see from the above, we're including several modules. The "ariali12pt7b" is a converted italic 12pt arial TTF font file, the Adafruit_rgb_display is the base module for the various TFT displays in Circuitpython. We're using SPI, because that's all that's supported so far and we're creating two objects: "display" to talk directly to the ILI9341 (this is where the "pixel()" function is defined, and the gfx object which is where the graphics functions are defined. One point: you could fill the screen either with display.fill(color) or gfx.fill(color) – either will work equally well.

A note about fonts:

The default 5 x 8 font considers the character "baseline" position to be the upper-left corner of the character's boundary box (an imaginary box which surrounds each character); whereas TTF (or Freetype) fonts consider the "baseline" position to be at the **lower-left** corner of the character's boundary box. This is important to remember when you decide the cursor position at which you want to begin your text. Don't try to output a TTF character at cursor position (0, 0) – you won't see a character! Instead, specify a character position such as (0, 18). You can take a look at the glyphs in the converted font file and see that the last value in each glyph is a negative number which is the "y – offset" value. I look at the glyphs, find the lowest number, take it's absolute value and add 1 to arrive at the starting "y" value for the text.

Function Reference

`gfx = GFX(swidth, sheight, pixel_name, font_name)`

Creates a graphics object (class name is GFX) which contains all the functions and variable associated with the graphics object.

`draw_char(char, x, y)`

Draws a character on the screen at the (x, y) coordinates provided. The foreground color, and size are the values previously set with the appropriate set... function(`setTextColor()`, `setTextSize()`). Note: that when writing text, the background color will correspond to the current background at that (x, y) position.

`drawCircle(x, y, r, color)`

Draws a circle of radius r pixels with its center being at (x, y) with the color specified.

`drawFastHLine(x, y, w, color)`

Draws a horizontal line, starting at (x, y) for a width of w pixels in the specified color.

`drawFastVLine(x, y, h, color)`

Draws a vertical line, starting at (x, y) for a height of h pixels in the specified color.

`drawLine(x0, y0, x1, y1, color)`

Draws a line from position (x0, y0) to position (x1, y1) in the specified color.

`drawRect(x, y, w, h, color)`

Draws a rectangle whose upper left corner is at (x, y) and whose width is w and height is h in the specified color.

`drawRoundRect(x, y, w, y, r, color)`

Draws a rectangle with rounded corners whose upper left corner is at (x, y) with a width of w, a height of h and of the specified color. The radius value is specified in pixels and represents the portion of a circle of radius r at each corner.

`drawTriangle(x0, y0, x1, y1, x2, y2, color)`

Draws a triangle with sides (x0, y0), (x1, y1); (x1, y1), (x2, y2); (x2, y2), (x0, y0). So, three lines are drawn between each successive set of coordinates.

`fillCircle(x, y, r, color)`

Draws a circle whose center is at coordinates (x, y) with a radius of r and fill it with the specified color.

`fillTriangle(x0, y0, x1, y1, x2, y2, color)`

Draws a triangle whose inside will be the specified color. See `drawTriangle()` for more info.

`fillRoundRect(x, y, w, y, r, color)`

Draws a round rectangle at the (x, y) coordinates provided with a width of w and a height of h. The rectangle will be filled with the color value. The corners will be rounded in accordance with the r value. See `drawRoundRect()` for more info.

`fcvar = getTextColor()`

Puts the value of the current text foreground color value into the variable fcvar. The default text foreground color is WHITE.

`bcvar = getBgColor()`

Puts the value of the current background color value into the variable bcvar. The default text background color is BLACK.

`var = getTextSize()`

Puts the current value of the text size variable into var. The default text size is 1.

`vx, vy = getCursor()`

Puts the current value of the x and y cursor values into the vx and vy variables.

`cx = getCursorX()`

Puts the current value of the x cursor value into the cx variable.

`cy = getCursorY()`

Puts the current value of the y cursor value into the cy variable.

`bmap = getBitmap(char)`

Gets the bitmap values for a custom font for the specified char and places the values into the tuple bmap. There are a variable number of items retrieved depending on the character.

`wp = getTextWrap()`

Puts the current value of the text wrap value (a Boolean) in the variable wp. The default value is True.

`x, y, w, h = getTextBounds('some text', x, y)`

Obtains the coordinates of the rectangle that will enclose the text if written at the provided (x, y) point. The width of the rectangle is returned as the w variable and the height is returned as the h variable. So, if you want to write some highlighted text (text with a different colored background) use `getTextBounds('some text', x, y)` to get the upper-left corner coordinates and the width and height of the rectangle; then, issue a `fillRectangle(x, y, w, h, newbgcolor)` and then issue a `text('some text', x, y)`. The end result of these 3 function calls will be highlighted text with a different colored background.

`setCursor(x, y)`

Sets the current CursorX and CursorY values to the supplied x and y values.

`setBgColor(bgcolor)`

Sets the current background color to the value of bgcolor. The color value should be obtained by using the `color565(r, g, b)` function provided in the `Adafruit_rgb_display` module. Default is: BLACK.

`setTextColor(fgcolor)`

Sets the current foreground color to the value of fgcolor. The color value should be obtained by using the `color565(r, g, b)` function of `Adafruit_rgb_display`. Default is WHITE.

`setTextWrap(wv)`

Sets the current text wrap Boolean value to the supplied wv value, either True or False to indicate what happens when text being written will exceed the boundaries of the display. If text wrap is off and text exceeds the boundary, it will disappear; if text wrap is on and text being written will exceed the screen boundaries, it will wrap to the next line. If at the bottom of the screen, it will wrap back to the top.

`text(str, x, y)`

Display the text represented by the string str on the display at the given (x, y) coordinates. The text will be written in the current foreground color as specified in the most recent `setTextColor()` or the default (WHITE). After the text has been written, issue:

`"x, y = getCursor()"` to get the updated cursor position

`txtw = width('some text')`

Returns the text width of the string specified as 'some text.' Note: this function is valid ONLY when using the default `font5x8.bin`. If using a custom font use the `getTextBounds(str, x, y)` function to obtain the text size values. The default font is 5 pixels high.

`writeLine(x0, y0, x1, y1, color)`

Draw a line from point (x0, y0) to (x1, y1) in the specified color.

`writeFillRect(x, y, w, h, color)`

Draw a filled rectangle whose upper-left corner is at point (x, y) and whose width is w, height is h and fill it with the specified color.

Users will note some functions that provide the same result. The only reason I can give for this is that I tried to duplicate the relevant functions from the `Adafruit_GFX.cpp` program. I'm suspecting that some of these apparent duplicate functions were put there to avoid having to re-write some other code. For example: `writeRectangle()` and `fillRect()` do exactly the same thing in exactly the same way. My suggestion is for users to use the `fillRect()` function rather

than the `writeRectangle` as it's name reflects the result. Future releases will probably eliminate these duplicate functions as they take up valuable program space.

