
Subject: regular expressions

Posted by [Michael Werger](#) on Fri, 04 Jun 1999 07:00:00 GMT

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Dear IDL'ers

for a complex batch processing in IDL I need to do some regular expression handling. Of course I can do this like:

```
function regexp_match,argument,pattern
  defsysv,!true, 1 eq 1 ; defined here only for completeness
  defsysv,!false, 1 eq 0 ; see above

  command='perl -e "print ( '"+argument+"' =~ m/' +pattern+' /)'"
  spawn,command,result
  if (result[0] eq 1) then result = !true else result = !false
  return,result
end
```

and then in some code:

```
if regexp_match(string,'s*d+') then print,'(spaces and) digits found!'
```

but this is rather slow, requires perl to be setup properly and so on. Did anyone already wrote some routines like `regexp_replace` and `regexp_match` (I think these names are speaking for themselves? - like the tcl routines `regsub` and `regexp`?

Suggestions to improve the above routine are also welcome.

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