
Subject: Re: Comma separators

Posted by [Martin Schultz](#) on Mon, 22 May 2000 07:00:00 GMT

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Who ever put out the word that MS Excel could be used by sane scientists should be hanged, quartered, stoned, etc. (or, to be a little more friendly: at least put into a different state of mind ;-)

As to the solution of your problem, Paul is giving the right clue: read as a string first, then do the processing. Depending on the file size and the number of times you will need to access this sort of output, it will eventually pay off to add a few error handling capacities such as CATCH... and test for empty strings in your STR_SEP result. Now, do you really want to attempt analyzing the date output as well ??

If I receive this kind of data, most often I prefer to start up this old moloch and clunky memory hog (I mean Excel) and attempt to put the stuff in a more ASCII friendly order and format before writing an IDL reader. Largest trouble I have with this piece of creamware is that seldomly two spreadsheets look alike because columns or rows are shifted etc. Oh well, this world ain't perfect (but on average certainly better than MS software)...

Enough rummaging,
Martin

Simon de Vet wrote:

```
>
> I am reading in data that looks like the following:
>
> CHATHAM ISLAND - NEW ZEALAND (DOE),,,,,,,,,,
> 43.92i½S,176.50i½W,,,,,,,,,
> 16-Sep-1983,11-Oct-1996,,,,,,,,,
> Mon,Stat,Cl,NO3,SO4,Na ,SeaSalt,nssSO4,MSA,Dust,NH4
> of,Param,Air,Air,Air,Air,Air,Air,Air,Air,Air
> Yr,*,i½g/m3,i½g/m3,i½g/m3,i½g/m3,i½g/m3,
i½g/m3,i½g/m3,i½g/m3,i½g/m3
> Jan,N,58,58,58,58,58,57,0,0,58
> Jan,Mean,7.330,0.120,1.572,4.233,13.766,0.508,#N/A,#N/A,0.10 3
> Jan,StdDev,2.788,0.055,0.412,1.479,4.811,0.249,#N/A,#N/A,0.0 51
>
> Which continues until the end of the year, and then another observation
```

> station follows the fame general format.
>
> I want to be able to read in the data into an array. I can already take
> out the header, but I cannot read in the data. By default, IDL is
> treating each line as one entry, not recognizing the commas as entry
> seperators. I've read the help extensively, but as a non-fortran user,
> the input format documentation makes my brane hurt.
>
> If I can read in the data, I think that I can manipulate it without too
> many problems...
>
> Thanks!
>
> Simon

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