
Subject: Re: Comma seperators

Posted by [Martin Schultz](#) on Wed, 24 May 2000 07:00:00 GMT

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Ok, ok... I back off. I even admit that I have used this "thing" once a while

for screwing (pun intended ;-). It's just that I have seen too many people (especially in the experimental world) relying heavily on Excel, and I have also seen many bad data sets which contained errors that were introduced by the spreadsheet program's "intelligence". That whole spreadsheet approach supports unorganized thinking in my view, because you can just add a parameter here or there and apply it to only a few cells or a few more, and once you exceed 1000 rows or so, it becomes almost impossible to track down such things. Then you create a second data set and you say: "huraah, I've got a template from the first data set", so you simply copy the new data into the old spread sheet. And suddenly you apply wrong calibration factors etc. And if only from a purely educational perspective: one should not allow students to use this sort of program for scientific data analysis! It's about as bad as writing 3d model code with hardcoded dimensions...

In summary:

Surgeon general's warning: Use of this software may endanger the health of your data especially under stress conditions as during field experiments. One piece of software contains 10 mg good stuff and 250 mg bad ballast.

Cheers,
Martin

Pavel Romashkin wrote:

>
> While sharing some points on MS products, I would argue that Excel is
> very good for some things, separating string record being among them. I
> don't know it well enough to beat IDL development with Excel, but I also
> use it to save time when working with unfriendly ASCII data. After that,
> other programs can be used. Excel, IMHO, has pathetic graphics. But
> again, you tend to use a screwdriver for driving screws, and the fact
> that it is no good for driving nails does not make it useless. Morale of
> the story - each application has its upsides, even Excel :-)

> Cheers,
> Pavel

>
> Martin Schultz wrote:

>>

>> Who ever put out the word that MS Excel could be used by sane scientists

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>> should
>> be hanged, quartered, stoned, etc. (or, to be a little more friendly: at
>> least put
>> into a different state of mind ;-)
>> -----
>> 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)....
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