

---

Subject: Re: BINARY FILES

Posted by [mole6e23](#) on Fri, 13 Oct 2000 07:00:00 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

mohamed\_nur@my-deja.com wrote:

> I've been dealing with binary files and every case i had to know before  
> hand the dimensions of the array to setup an IDL variable of the said  
> dimesions and read the unformatted data into.  
>  
> But is it possible or is there a method (in IDL 5.2/5.3) to read it in  
> with no knowledge of the dimensions of the array.

I always use the fstat routine, which gets a bunch of information about the file, but the only one I ever use is the size field:

```
;-----  
openr,lun,'file.dat',/get_lun  
stat = fstat( lun )
```

```
array = fltarr( stat.size )
```

```
readu,lun,array
```

```
free_lun, lun  
;----
```

Alternatively, if you're on UNIX, you can use the /nostdio keyword which lets you just read willy nilly until the end of the file, and then get the transfer count from the readu procedure. It's not a good way of doing things, in my opinion, but it works:

```
:: Allocate a much bigger array than you need  
array = fltarr( 1e5 )  
openr,lun,'file.dat',/get_lun,/nostdio  
readu,lun,array,transfer_count=count  
array = temporary(array)[0:count-1]  
free_lun, lun
```

Hope this helps,  
Todd

---