
Subject: Re: Regular Expressions

Posted by [Wayne Landsman](#) on Tue, 20 Mar 2001 20:14:54 GMT

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"Pavel A. Romashkin" wrote:

> Wouldn't it be easier to analyse a byte array with more human-readable
> functions, than those beautiful regular expressions you guys brought up?
>

It depends on what you mean by "easier". One nice thing about STREGEX is that it works on vector strings. One can always convert the string array to a byte array and analyze, but -- **if you are trying to avoid loops** -- the indexing can become extremely opaque, and exercise at least as many brain cells as using STREGEX. For example, JD's solution can also apply to a string array where one is trying to extract the substrings beginning and ending with a single quote:

```
IDL> st = ["value1 = 'Wayne's dog' / First string ", $  
         "value2 = 'Sue's dog and Ralph's cat' / Second string ", $  
         "value3 = 'two pigeons'"]
```

```
IDL> val = (strex(st, /SUBEXPR,/EXTRACT,"= *'(.*)'([^\"]|$)"))[1,*]  
IDL> print,val  
Wayne's dog  
Sue's dog and Ralph's cat  
two pigeons
```

Of course, one should probably add an English comment to the use of STRGEX

```
; Find the substring beginning with an "=", followed by any number of  
characters,  
; followed by a quote, followed by any number of characters (including  
double  
; quotes) up to the last single quote. Extract from this substring all  
; characters between the first and last single quotes.
```
