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Subject: Re: End of Array - like - End Of File  
Posted by [R.Bauer](#) on Fri, 24 Aug 2001 10:02:58 GMT  
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"Liam E. Gumley" wrote:

>  
> Timm Weitkamp wrote:  
>>  
>> Reimar's suggestion of using the COUNT keyword to FINDFILE is indeed  
>> \*much\* better than using N\_ELEMENTS, because the latter will result in  
>> an error when the file list is empty (unless you use an additional  
>> line to catch that situation). The reason is that when FINDFILE finds  
>> no matches, its return value is a scalar null string, and N\_ELEMENTS()  
>> of that is one (not zero).  
>>  
>> Reimar Bauer <r.bauer@fz-juelich.de> wrote in message  
news:<3B7FF5BE.526BE6@fz-juelich.de>...  
>>> "Emmler, Oliver" wrote:  
>>>  
>>> Hi all,  
>>> i have a directory with different numbers of files. I read the filenames by  
>>>  
>>> text = FINDFILE('H:/radiologie/\*.dcm')  
>>  
>> you should use the count keyword of findfile  
>>  
>> Result = FINDFILE( File\_Specification [, COUNT=variable] )  
>>  
>> FOR i=0,count-1 do ...  
>>  
>> regards  
>> Reimar  
>  
> I actually prefer the following syntax:  
>  
> list = findfile("\*.dcm")  
> if (list[0] ne "") then begin  
> ;- process each name in list  
> endif  
>  
> This takes advantage of the fact that FINDFILE returns a null string if  
> no files are found.  
>

I know but there are always different result values if a function gives  
no results.

The most popular are -1, "", 0 and <null pointer>

The count is known by where too and some others. This gives a possibility to write code always in the same way. And I like it much more as e.g.

```
if idx[0] ne -1 then ...
if ptr_valid(ptr) then ..
if list[0] ne "" then ..
if x[0] ne 0 then ..
```

Sometimes I wish all unknown results are returned as null pointer. But then I have to change all old routines.

regards

Reimar

> Cheers,  
> Liam.  
> Practical IDL Programming  
> <http://www.gumley.com/>

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Reimar Bauer

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a IDL library at ForschungsZentrum Juelich  
[http://www.fz-juelich.de/icg/icg1/idl\\_icglib/idl\\_lib\\_intro.h.html](http://www.fz-juelich.de/icg/icg1/idl_icglib/idl_lib_intro.h.html)

<http://www.fz-juelich.de/zb/text/publikation/juel3786.html>

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read something about linux / windows  
<http://www.suse.de/de/news/hotnews/MS.html>

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