
Subject: Re: Time Woes

Posted by [Ken Mankoff](#) on Wed, 01 May 2002 20:10:21 GMT

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On Wed, 1 May 2002, David Fanning wrote:

> I have a time array that purports to be the number of seconds from 1
> Jan 1980. How in the world do I convert that to something I can use
> with routines I have access to?

First, before you deal with any conversions, you have to understand exactly what it means to have "seconds since 1980".

What clock system are you on? Is it 365 day years (and leap-years), or 365.25, or something more accurate than that? The clocks here at work have leap-seconds thrown in every few months (I believe this is one of the many subtle distinctions between UTC, GMT, and Zulu, but am not sure).

Then again, depending on the resolution of the data (and x-axis if you are plotting it), does any of these different "times" matter to you?

Beyond that, I am not sure what you want to convert it to... Can't you just start doing division until you have it into "days since 1980"?

The other option is to add 10 years worth of seconds onto the array (again: exactly how many seconds are there in your year calendar?), now you have it as seconds from 1 Jan 1970. This is the same format as UNIX and the IDL SYSTIME() function, so you should be able to handle this array better...

Does this help?

-k.

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