
Subject: Re: readcol procedure

Posted by [Liam E. Gumley](#) on Thu, 12 Sep 2002 15:43:37 GMT

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Wayne Landsman wrote:

>
> Reimar Bauer wrote:
>
>> this routine is platform dependent because it uses a unix shell command.
>> I like unix but it's not a problem for idl to determine this itself.
>
> numlines.pro (<http://idlastro.gsfc.nasa.gov/ftp/pro/misc/numlines.pro> called by readcol.pro) only
> spawns to the Unix 'wc' command if !VERSION.OS equals 'unix' (for speed). Otherwise it
counts the
> number of lines.
>
>> Perhaps you can try the routine file_line I have defined in 1996 and
>> which was improved later by Paul Krummel. You can find this routine by
>> David at http://www.dfanning.com/tip_examples/file_line.pro
>
> Hmm, I would have thought that reading the entire file into a byte array simply to count the
number
> of lines would be overkill. But in my quick tests, file_line.pro does seem to be faster than
> counting the number of lines, and almost as fast (on Unix) as spawning to 'wc'.
>
> I have heard a rumor that there may be a standardized way of counting the number of lines in a
file
> in the next release of IDL ;-)

I'm curious: Why does anyone need to count the number of lines in an ASCII file? If it's to subsequently read the file, then the EOF function can be used instead to tell you where the input file ends, and it requires only one pass through the input file. There must be another application that I don't know about. Or is it just easier to write code that reads an ASCII file with a known number of lines?

Can anyone enlighten me?

Cheers,

Liam.

Practical IDL Programming

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