Subject: Re: IDL vs AWK input
Posted by David Fanning on Tue, 19 Nov 2002 23:02:54 GMT
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Jason Quinn (jason_quinn@yahoo.com) writes:

> <IDL RANT ON>
> Wouldn't IDL be a trillion times better if it handled reading input in
> a style similar to awk, i.e. using $1, $2, etc., for reading in
> columns? IDL seems overdependant on format codes and the number of
> lines in a file. Also I'm sick of asking people how to do something
> simple with file input/output and instead of them telling me how to do
> it *in IDL* they direct me to some Joe Blow's webpage with a script
> that does it. I don't want some guy's script, I want to know how to do
> it in IDL. Am I a troll? No. I'm just fed-up with IDL's wacky syntax
> and half-baked feel and I needed to vent. IDL feels like a shaky house
> of cards. I know the way to do the things above, EOF, etc., but my
> point is that it's a poorly designed language. As a casual user, I
> basically need to relearn it every month or two because I've forgotten
> it in the meantime. The language is difficult to remember because it
> makes no sense.
> <IDL RANT OFF>

For what it's worth, I feel like this too, sometimes.
Yesterday, for example, I wanted to read a file of
numbers that has NaNs scattered through-out. I got

   "Can't read string with F format."

Say what? Sigh... Go look up READS for the thousandth
time, at least.

But on the other hard, I get just as wigged out at
Microsoft trying to read my mind. "Wait a minute,
hold on there, I didn't want to format the whole damn
paper that way!"

There is a middle ground somewhere (and I don't think
it's Matlab, either, after reading a few of their m files).
At least with IDL if you've done the same damn thing five
times, you have probably written a little program to do it.
(Or, at least you should have.) Now, if you had only had
sense enough at the time to document it... :-(

Cheers,

David
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