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Subject: Re: Fortran unformatted data: Big or little endian  
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 30 Apr 2003 20:31:05 GMT  
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Mark Hadfield (m.hadfield@niwa.co.nz) writes:

- > If you have a reasonably recent version of IDL (>= 5.4??) and you know
- > the byte-order of the machine on which you're \*reading\* the data then
- > you can use OPEN's SWAP\_IF\_BIG\_ENDIAN or SWAP\_IF\_LITTLE\_ENDIAN
- > keywords. Here's the documentation entry for the former:
- >
- > SWAP\_IF\_BIG\_ENDIAN
- >
- > Setting this keyword is equivalent to setting SWAP\_ENDIAN; it only
- > takes effect if the current system has big endian byte
- > ordering. This keyword does not refer to the byte ordering of the
- > input data, but to the computer hardware.

The problem seems to be that the guy doesn't know the ordering of the INPUT data. Like always, if you don't know what it is you are reading, you are in for a bit of bother (to paraphrase Winnie the Pooh).

Maybe he will get lucky. It happens. :-)

Cheers,

David

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