
Subject: Re: Forcing READ_ASCII output to be a set of strings...
Posted by [Michael Wallace](#) on Mon, 14 Mar 2005 20:51:13 GMT
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Jonathan Greenberg wrote:

> I kinda answered my own question -- I took the read_ascii.pro that IDL
> distributes and simply changed the default behavior on this line:
>
> fieldTypesUse = REPLICATE(4L, fieldCountUse)
>
> To
>
> fieldTypesUse = REPLICATE(7L, fieldCountUse)
>
> This appears to work fine... I'm kicking IDL a request to modify this so
> it'll default to a user-defined format...
>

Um, this is dangerous. First, if you ever want to distribute this application, or at least give it to someone else, you'll have to make the same modification in their IDL install. It can be *very* problematic.

Second, why should the default be string rather than float? Just because you have a need to use strings for this particular application doesn't mean that RSI should change their defaults. For default values, a floating point number is the best assumption to make. If the default values don't work for you, use a template. This is why templates exist...

-Mike
