Subject: Re: file_lines and expand path
Posted by James Kuyper on Fri, 04 Aug 2006 21:48:38 GMT
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Paul van Delst wrote:

...

> Hang on a minute.... in the IDL file_lines documentation it states:

>

>

> Return Value

> ------------

> Returns the number of lines of text contained within the specified file or files. If an

> array of file names is specified via the Path parameter, the return value is an array with

Note: "If an array of file names is specified ...".

> the same number of elements as Path, with each element containing the number of lines in

> the corresponding file.

>

> Arguments

> ---------

>   Path

> A scalar string or string array containing the names of the text files for which the

> number of lines is desired.

>

>

> So, the IDL version of file_lines *should* return an array when multiple files are given.

> Does this mean IDL has a bug in file_lines() with regards to how it handles wildcard

> input? The words associated with the /NOEXPAND_PATH suggest that wildcard inputs are

> allowed (although it doesn't specifically say it).

I've tested it, and an array of strings works exactly as it should. I
suspect that the possibility of a string argument containing wildcards
that allow it to match multiple files was not even considered.

Issue: if the FL version returns an array when given a string argument
with wildcards that match multiple files, how should it handle an array
of string arguments, some or all of which have that same
characteristic? Personally, I think it should return an array of line
counts with the same length as the array of path names; anything else
would make it very complicated for the the calling routine to match up
inputs and outputs. I'd recommend using a total when multiple matches
to a wildcard occur, because I can actually imagine contexts where that
would be useful. I can't see anything useful about returning the length
of a randomly member of the matching set of files.