
Subject: Re: readcol with empty fields

Posted by news.verizon.net on Wed, 30 Aug 2006 17:59:06 GMT

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burkina wrote:

> Instead, I need all the lines to be read and, when the field is empty,
> a value of 0 (or, better, something like NULL, something that should be
> ignored) should be put in the vector if it's a number, or simply the
> null string if it's a string field.
>

1. For strings, READCOL should already work as you wish -- an empty field will be read as an empty string.

2. For numeric fields, try downloading a new version of strnumber.pro from <http://idlastro.gsfc.nasa.gov/ftp/pro/misc/strnumber.pro> In ancient history (1993) , there was a kluge added to strnumber.pro such that an empty string was not considered a valid number. (At that time, doing otherwise could corrupt the ~V3.6 IDL session.) I have now removed this kluge so READCOL will read empty strings into zero values.

3. For floating point numbers, you probably don't want a zero value but rather a NaN value. In this case, I'd read the column, say f6, as a string array, and identify the empty strings before converting to float.

```
f6 = strtrim(f6,2)
bad = where(strlen(f6) EQ 0, Nbad)
if Nbad GT 0 then f6[bad] = 'NaN'
f6 = float(f6)
```

I suppose it would be useful to have a /NAN keyword to READCOL do this automatically.

--Wayne
