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Subject: Re: can i read multiple files?

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Fri, 22 Sep 2006 02:46:14 GMT

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zircola writes:

```
> Thanks every one, i am learning a lot, i tried all of them. using file
> search i put all the files in the array but didn't know how to invoke
> it with for loop, i tried like this
>
> file_array=file_search('filepath', '*.dat', count=num_file)
> for i=0,num_file-1 do begin
> file=file_array(i)
>
> openr, lun, /get_lun, file
>
> (read file here)
> free_lun, lun
> (do all the stuffs like plotting etc here)
>
> endfor
>
> is this how i use the file stored in the array?
>
> for the similar named files, the one suggested by paul works
> great,..thanks
> i just hope my question is not so stupid
```

Humm. Questions are rarely stupid. I think the problem here is that we are assuming you know a bit more about this than I suspect you do. Most of the people who come to IDL come having written some kind of computer program before. I get the impression you have not. If this is so, I would HIGHLY recommend Ken Bowman's book *An Introduction to Programming with IDL*. It's great for teaching you what a FOR loop is, etc.

You have mostly the right idea here, but I don't think you have really tried this code out. For example, this code is not likely to work:

```
file_array=file_search('filepath', '*.dat', count=num_file)
```

To see if it worked you could test how many files you found:

```
IDL> Print, num_file
```

Or, you could see how big your file\_array variable is:

IDL> Help, file\_array

The reason it doesn't work is that 'filepath' is not likely to be the path to YOUR files. Your path is going to look more like "C:\RSI\ZIRCOLA\DATA" or "/usr/zircola/data", or something. We can't help you with this because you haven't told us anything about what machine you are running IDL on, etc. The syntax 'filepath' is what we refer to as "pseudo code". We mean you will have to replace that with what is right for YOUR situation. As a beginning user, it is often difficult to tell pseudo code from real code.

Then, if you put all your plotting stuff inside the loop, you are going to have some trouble because your plots will appear and disappear so fast you won't be able to enjoy them. You will end up looking at just the LAST plot. So, typically, you will do all your file reading, and THEN you will plot your graphics.

I suggest you maybe start with one file, and see if you can read that and plot it. Once you have that under your belt you can extend it to more than a single file. This way you will know which part of your code works and which part still has problems.

Cheers,

David

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Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>

Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

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