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Subject: Re: Testing validity of numerical content of a string  
Posted by [Brian Larsen](#) on Thu, 07 Dec 2006 02:50:25 GMT  
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I just read you post a little closer and the numbers you have are more complicated but not too bad.

```
IDL> print, stregex('hello', '[a-df-zA-DF-Z]', /boolean)
1
IDL> print, stregex('3.14159', '[a-df-zA-DF-Z]', /boolean)
0
IDL> print, stregex('3.14159e3', '[a-df-zA-DF-Z]', /boolean)
0
```

To make it work perfectly you would need to know a little more info about what could be there but if's based on these regular expressions can tell the difference between 'hello' and '-.3e-4' which can then build `valid_float.pro`.

When I can't remember the syntax I always grab my sed & awk book but there are plenty of online references as well.

Cheers,

Brian

```
On Dec 6, 6:49 pm, "Brian Larsen" <balar...@gmail.com> wrote:
> On Dec 6, 6:38 pm, David Fanning <n...@dfanning.com> wrote:
>
>> Y.T. writes:
>>> Maybe this is a stupid question, but is there a way in IDL to tell
>>> whether a string contains a valid representation of a particular data
>>> type? For example an integer? I can do something likeOne "unixy" way to do this is with
regular expressions. I end up using
> these all the time (any should more).
>
> Play with something like:
> IDL> a='hello'
> IDL> print, stregex(a, '[a-zA-Z]', /boolean)
> 1
> IDL> b='3.14159'
> IDL> print, stregex(b, '[a-zA-Z]', /boolean)
> 0
> And one could work out a better regexp that looked for other
> non-numeric chars as well.
```

>  
> This is good and easy.  
>  
> Cheers,  
> Brian

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