
Subject: Q: About reading files into an array without knowing the size.

Posted by [David van Kuijk](#) on Thu, 02 Nov 1995 08:00:00 GMT

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Hi

One of the nice things of IDL is that it is possible to read whole ASCII-files of data (e.g. floats) into an array in one swoop, without having to go through a while loop which reads all of these numbers one by one. E.g.:

```
OPENR,1, "filename"
floatss=FLTARR(10000)
READF, 1, floatss
```

What is not so nice is that IDL has to know exactly how many datapoints there are in the file, otherwise not all the data are read, or you get sth like an "End of file encountered"-error. So the size of `_floatss_` in the example above should be equal to the number of floats in the file.

I know that Matlab is capable of processing files with an unknown number of data.

Does anybody know a way to achieve this in IDL (maybe I missed something)?

David,

```
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