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

Posted by [Thomas W. Fredian](#) on Tue, 07 Nov 1995 08:00:00 GMT

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David van Kuijk wrote:

```
>
> 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
>
...
```

I just tried to write a simple procedure with an on_ioerror to trap the end of file error and it seems to work fairly well:

```
function readarray,unit
f = fstat(unit)
maxvals=f.size
answer=fltarr(maxvals) ; Allocate an array guaranteed to be big enough
on_ioerror,finish      ; Trap end of file error
readf,unit,answer      ; Read in what values are there
finish:
f = fstat(unit)
return,answer(0:f.transfer_count-1) ; return the truncated array
end
```

I tested this with IDL Version 4.0.1(vms alpha) and it seems to work.

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