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Subject: HISTOGRAM and string data

Posted by [MarioIncandenza](#) on Thu, 03 May 2007 00:55:06 GMT

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Hello IDL Wizards,

I did a search on the group for this, and found a post whose `_subject_` was my problem exactly, but the poster actually wanted something completely different (and was instantly satisfied).

I have an application where I have an array of `STRING_DATA`, and I need to calculate stats of `FLOAT_DATA` based on the value of `STRING_DATA`. If `HISTOGRAM` worked on strings, this would be as simple as:

```
hstr=histogram(STRING_DATA,reverse_indices=ristr)
answer=hstr * 0.0
for i=0l,n_elements(hstr) do if(hstr[i] gt 0) then answer[i] =
f(FLOAT_DATA[ristr[ristr[i]:(ristr[i+1]-1)]])
```

I thought `UNIQ` might help me, but it depends on doing a `SORT`, and sorting `DATA` is something I'd like to avoid if possible.

One approach is to convert the `STRING_DATA` into some form of number, like longword integers. Any suggestions on how to do that without creating a very sparse field (if the resulting histogram has `1e8` elements, that isn't necessarily going to work)?

Oh, and feel free to bring on the slow solutions, this is not a time-dependent problem ;)

--Edward H.

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