
Subject: Re: how to tell it is character or it is number?

Posted by [Conor](#) on Tue, 07 Aug 2007 17:41:23 GMT

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On Aug 7, 11:38 am, wlandsman <wlands...@gmail.com> wrote:

```
>> Is there a way I can tell whether it is numbers or it is characters?
>> 'fix' command can convert the numbers, it will give an error message
>> then continue to the execution.
>
> There are lots of programs around to do this, with two variants.  The
> first tests, as you suggest, whether IDL can convert the string into a
> numeric value
>
> http://idlastro.gsfc.nasa.gov/ftp/pro/misc/strnumber.pro
>
> But IDL will consider the string '1qz_3' to be a valid number (=1) so
> if you want a more usual interpretation, you need a more detailed
> test of whether the ordering of digits, letters and decimal points
> make sense as in
>
> http://idlastro.gsfc.nasa.gov/ftp/pro/misc/valid_num.pro
>
> --Wayne
```

I would just try stregex. From what you've shown so far, all it would take is this:

```
if stregex( string, '[^0-9]', /boolean ) then ; this not numeric
else ; this is numeric
```

that is assuming, of course, that the numeric data you will be checking only contains the numbers 0-9. If you have negative signs, or decimal points, or whitespace, then above regular expression will have to be adjusted accordingly.
