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Subject: Re: byte offset in POINT\_LUN

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 08 Aug 2007 21:36:56 GMT

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Josh writes:

> as i'm cruising through, reading a large ascii file, I'd like to keep  
> track of the beginning of certain "blocks" of code. in the event that  
> i find what i'm looking for within the block, I'd like to PRINTF the  
> entire block (the beginning of which is now above my file position).  
> I've used POINT\_LUN to return to the start of a file before, by  
> setting position=0, but is there a way I can use POINT\_LUN to go to a  
> specific line within the file (since I'm not sure how that would  
> correspond to a byte offset) ?

I've never used POINT\_LUN like this in an ASCII file,  
but I had an idea that seems to work in the few tests  
I've just made.

Suppose you open an ASCII data file:

```
OPENR, lun, 'myfile.txt', /GET_LUN
```

And suppose you read the first 10 lines of the  
file:

```
data = StrArr(10)  
READF, lun, data
```

Now, say you want to come back to this spot later,  
you need to know where you are in the file. In an  
unformatted file you could probably count and get  
the value correctly. An ASCII file is \*way\* more  
complicated, but POINT\_LUN can tell us if we use  
a "negative" value for the logical unit number:

```
POINT_LUN, -lun, thisPoint
```

Now you could read more data:

```
READF, lun, data
```

When you want to return to the previous point in the  
file, you can use POINT\_LUN again:

```
POINT_LUN, lun, thisPoint
```

And, viola! You are back! :-)

Cheers,

David

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Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>

Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

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