
Subject: Re: read_ascii for many rows / possible to create automatic names for variables

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 05 Dec 2007 17:15:40 GMT

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Britta writes:

> Thank you, the file is on its way.

Ah, well, ain't that interesting!

The problem here is that while **most** of your columns are separated by blank characters, two of your columns are separated by tabs. What this basically means is that you should find a gun and shoot the person who created this data file. :-)

What is happening is that I used a blank character as the separator for calculating the number of columns in the file, and because of the two tabs, I come up two columns short in the calculation. I calculate 1030 and there are really 1032. Thus, my columns are totally messed up, and I never read all the data in the file.

So, since these data files are probably identical from one run to the next, you could probably just use the number 1032 for the number of columns and the code would work perfectly.

The other alternative (besides shooting the programmer, I mean) is to use a regular expression as the column separator in StrSplit. As you are a beginner, and as this is something even I don't understand, we will leave it to our betters to fill us in on how THIS can be done. :-)

My best guess is that it is something like this:

```
parts = StrSplit(line, '[' + String(9B) + ']+', /REGEX, /EXTRACT)
cols = N_Elements(parts)
```

Hope that helps. I haven't see **this** problem before. :-)

Cheers,

David

P.S. It looks to me like I got that expression right from the quick test I just ran.

--

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Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>
Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")
