
Subject: Re: newbie MOMENT question

Posted by [wmc](#) on Wed, 17 Jul 1996 07:00:00 GMT

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> Charlotte DeMott wrote:

>> I want to compute the mean and variance of a set of data points, and
>> I'm using the MOMENT procedure to do it. With some fields, the
>> variance is quite small (i.e., $o(e-03)$), so I get floating point
>> underflow errors when MOMENT tries to compute the skewness and
>> kurtosis. since i don't really care about the skewness and kurtosis,
>> how can i get IDL to not worry about this, and continue with the
>> rest of the procedure? online help suggests that some combination
>> of ON_ERROR and/or CATCH would be appropriate, but i haven't been
>> able to figure out exactly how to use these two yet. any suggestions?

Actually, there is a built-in routine "stdev" that computes the standard deviation. Its in the "obsolete" directory. Presumably it was put there on the grounds that it isn't ;-)

Re the floating underflows, I have found this to be a problem elsewhere. It seems to be impossible to prevent the error messages. I've mentioned this to some IDL support people and they basically said "ah well..."

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