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Subject: Re: Probably a really simple read\_ascii question....

Posted by [greg.addr](#) on Thu, 01 Oct 2009 17:51:20 GMT

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On 1 Okt., 15:59, hethomas <het...@googlemail.com> wrote:

> I am trying to read in a text file (which is in column format) using  
> read\_Ascii. Most of my variables read in fine, with the exception of  
> the "time" column, where data is in HH:MM:SS format. (IDL reads these  
> in as 1.0000). Anyone know how to get around this?  
> I did try playing with ascii\_template (although I don't really want to  
> have to use it), but for some reason, won't work and gives me the  
> error message:  
> Variable is undefined: SCREEN\_SIZE.  
> Error occurred at: AT\_WIDGET 1364 C:\RSI\IDL63\lib  
> \ascii\_template.pro  
> ASCII\_TEMPLATE 1690 C:\RSI\IDL63\lib  
> \ascii\_template.pro  
>  
> I have the annoying feeling that this can be answered  
> straightforwardly, and I just can't see it! Thanks in advance....  
>  
> Helen

read\_ascii is painful to use. It's simpler to use function like this:

```
function read_textfile,filename
  n=file_lines(filename)
  s=strarr(n)
  openr,lun,filename,/get_lun
  readf,lun,s
  free_lun,lun
  return,s
end
```

and deal with the strings yourself. For time formats, you can make use of this for decoding:

```
IDL> t='12:34:26'
IDL> time=0d ;you have to declare a double in advance...
IDL> reads,t,time,format='(C(CHI,x,CMI,x,CSI))'
IDL> print,string(time,format='(C())')
Sat Jan 01 12:34:26 1
```

Greg

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