
Subject: Re: Problem to read some data.

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 26 Oct 2009 11:56:18 GMT

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jkeller writes:

> Just use the quoted code above. This should read the data into
> variable 'a'. It will be as fast as it could be when reading text
> files with IDL.

Well, not necessarily. READ_ASCII **does**, necessarily, use a FOR loop. If the data were all numerical (no strings), or regularly spaced (so you could use a FORMAT statement), then it would be much faster to allocate an array of floats (or whatever) and read the data all at once in the IDL way.

Of course, if you don't know the number of columns and rows, then you have to allocate time to find those things out. For example, File_Lines has to read the entire file to count the number of EOL markers in the file to determine how many rows there are. But, still, even with this overhead it is often (almost always?) faster to read data the IDL way than to use READ_ASCII. That is the main reason I've never used it. Even taking into account the five lines of code you need to type, doing so was faster than waiting for READ_ASCII to finish!

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.")
