
Subject: Re: Match Histogram Binsize with Data Type
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 07 Mar 2013 18:12:35 GMT
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Paul van Delst writes:

> If it makes you feel any better, I lay awake at night worrying about
> plausibly incorrect results. In any language.

Well, it **does** make me feel better. :-)

> But, I don't really use IDL to produce quantitative results (computing
> means and stddevs don't count)

I was on a forum web page not too long ago and the folks there were going off on how horrible IDL was to do anything sensible and how it confounded expectations, was impossible for new people to learn, etc. Then some guy jumps in to say, 'Wait, there is a web site out there where the guy tries to fix all the things that are wrong with IDL.'

It stopped me. Is that what I've been doing all these years? Fixing IDL?

I suppose it is. And then I got totally depressed. Why do I do this work? And why do I do it for free, for God's sake!? I've no money in the bank, a job that pays very little, and I choose to spend my time fixing IDL. It's a joke.

That's when I decided to go trekking in Patagonia. :-)

Before I leave, though, I wrote my own histogram routine, `cgHistogram`, which I am just about to add to the Coyote Library. It fixes the bug with byte arrays (not fixed officially until IDL 8.2), checks to be sure the binsize data type matches the data type of the data you are binning, so you always get the correct results, allows for missing values in the histogram, will smooth the data if needed, and will return the relative frequency, instead of the histogram count, if you want that. It is a HELL of a lot better than the Histogram command, as always. Maybe one or two people will use it. ;-)

Cheers,

David

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

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