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Subject: Re: SPAWN with AWK  
Posted by [Chip Helms](#) on Sat, 09 Mar 2013 15:54:43 GMT  
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I think IDL is interpreting the "" as a single " (since " ends the string in this case "" is used to place a single double-quote...if you started your string with a ' instead, you'd have to use " to have IDL print a single ' ). If you change it to (min=""") I think it should work. Also, as to reading data with spawn and awk, my experience has been that it is considerably less efficient than IDL's built-in routines, but the difference is not usually noticeable unless you are calling spawn/awk a large number of time (such as in a for loop).

Cheers,  
Chip

On Saturday, March 9, 2013 9:38:58 AM UTC, Hannah wrote:

> Hi there,

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> I have to read in a lot of data files in my IDL script and thought about using SPAWN with AWK for this. So far, I did it with READCOL and WHERE functions but I find it kind of convenient to do it with just one line in AWK (but I have no idea of the efficiencies, if someone could say anything to this..).

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> No I have some problems with my command, as there are too many ". The line looks like this:

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> spawn, "awk '{if (min=="") {min=max=\$17}; if (\$17>max) {(max=\$17) && (maxid=\$1)}; if ((\$17<min) && (\$17!=0.)) {(min=\$17) && (minid=\$1)}} END {print min, minid, max, maxid}' dat file"  
val\_vec

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> Not surprisingly, I get an "unterminated string" error bec of the "s at (min==""). So my question is, if anyone has an idea to fix this either in the awk command or anyhow in IDL.

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> Thanks for your help!

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> Hannah

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