
Subject: Re: Writing a modified .txt file issue
Posted by [Phillip Bitzer](#) on Mon, 29 Jul 2013 20:03:02 GMT
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I also have an ASCII data file that contains both numeric and string columns. I'm not a fan. What I'm doing now is read the whole thing in as a string array:

```
nLines = FILE_LINES(filename)
OPENR, lun, filename, /GET_LUN
word = STRARR(nLines)
READF, lun, word
FREE_LUN, lun
```

Then, I loop through each line, using STR_SPLIT to divvy up the fields at the space that separates the columns, and throw them into the output structure (not defined here for simplicity)

```
FOR i=0L, nLines-1 DO BEGIN
  this_row = STRSPLIT(word[i], ' ', /extract)
  data[i].date = this_row[0]
  data[i].time = this_row[1]
  data[i].latitude = DOUBLE(this_row[2])
  data[i].longitude = DOUBLE(this_row[3])
  ....
ENDFOR
```

I have been looking for a better/more efficient way of doing this. Can't seem to find a good way, but maybe Coyote has cooked up something :-) ReadCol works about as quickly as my code.

I should mention that there are several string columns mixed up amongst the numeric columns. Yuck.

For the output, Hakan, I would say those numbers *do* match, although they might be formatted differently. You'll want to use the FORMAT keyword, however you're writing the file back out if you want to match the numbers/decimal places/etc.

A simple example:

```
IDL> a = 13.2
IDL> PRINT, a
      13.2000
IDL> PRINT, a, format='(F5.2)'
      13.20
IDL> PRINT, a, format='(F4.1)'
      13.2
```

You would do something similar using PRINTF.
