On Monday, February 29, 2016 at 11:58:32 AM UTC-5, Sapna Mishra wrote:
> Actually I want to grep a particular column say column 2 from fname[i] and want to save it to fnameo[i] as an output. In IDL I don't know how to read any file having unknown numbers of columns because in READCOL to read file we need to mention a variable for each column in which particular column will get stored.

Here is a short IDL program to read the number of columns in a file, e.g.
ncol = findnumcol('myfile.dat')

```
function findnumcol, file
; Return the number of columns of data in a file
; Just reads the first line and assume rest of the file
; is the same.   Could add code to skip header lines
openr,lun,file,/get_lun
st = ''
readf,lun,st
free_lun,lun
tmp = strsplit(st,count=ncol)
return,ncol
end
```