
Subject: Re: string functions and arrays

Posted by [news.verizon.net](#) on Wed, 11 Oct 2006 18:01:23 GMT

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greg michael wrote:

> Isn't it odd that STRMID can't operate on a string array? I can get a
> nice set of positions from an array with STRPOS, but can't apply them
> like this...
>

STRMID does operate on string arrays but with a funky syntax. You can search on "strmid" and "vector" in the archives to see previous posts on the topic but I'll quote from myself.

"The problem when STRMID was vectorized for V5.3 was that it was made **too** powerful -- it handles simultaneously both extraction from multiple strings and multiple extractions from a single string. In practice, I think the first situation -- extraction from multiple strings -- is far more common, but has an ugly syntax in the current STRMID implementation.

The online help describes the vector use of STRMID this way:

"If First_Character or Length is an array, the size of their first dimension determines how many substrings are extracted from each element of Expression. We call this the "stride". If both are arrays, they must have the same stride. If First_Character or Length do not contain enough elements to process Expression, STRMID automatically loops back to the beginning as necessary. Excess values are ignored. If the stride is 1, the result will have the same structure and number of elements as Expression. If it is greater than 1, the result will have an additional dimension, with the new first dimension having the same size as the stride. "

In your example, the call to strmid() needs to be (if there are Npts values in your array)
strmid(lbl, 0, reform(p-1, 1, npts))

I've thought about writing a wrapper to strmid() that provides an easy syntax for the common case of single extractions from multiple strings, but in practice I usually use
<http://idlastro.gsfc.nasa.gov/ftp/pro/misc/gettok.pro>
to extract strings, (and this includes a vector call to strmid() internally). --Wayne

Subject: Re: string functions and arrays

Posted by [greg michael](#) on Wed, 11 Oct 2006 21:47:31 GMT

Thanks, Wayne. I read through that paragraph at least three times before I posted - I'd decided that whatever it was that it might mean, it couldn't be what I was looking for. After seeing your solution, it took me more than another three readings to grasp what it was that you'd done!

Anyway, I'm glad there is a solution. I think it can be written even more simply as:

```
strmid(lbl, 0, transpose(p-1))
```

and

```
strmid(lbl, transpose(p+1))
```

which, after all, I don't find such a bad syntax. An example in the documentation could have been useful...

thanks again,
Greg
