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Subject: Using IDLdoc to format documentation  
Posted by [David Gell](#) on Tue, 15 Jan 2013 21:09:57 GMT  
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I've got a couple of questions about using idldoc to format file documentation. First, I've a function that can return a status code. The header is formatted as follows:

```
; :RETURNS:  
; -1 IF xUTC1 < xUTC2  
;  0 IF xUTC1 == XUTC2  
;  1 IF xUTC1 > XUTC2
```

The idldoc output concatenates the 3 lines:

Return Value

-1 IF xUTC1 < xUTC2 0 IF xUTC1 == XUTC2 1 IF xUTC1 > XUTC2

Is there a way to insure that the line breaks are maintained. I've found a kludge where I change the returns tag line as follows:

:Returns: ::

Note the two colons following the returns tag. This results in idldoc output with excessive blank lines.

Return value

:

```
-1 IF xUTC1 < xUTC2  
0 IF xUTC1 == XUTC2  
1 IF xUTC1 > XUTC2
```

Is there a better way to do this. I've a similar problem with history items. if I omit the :: in the following snippet, the change history lines are all concatenated and hard to read.

```
; :HISTORY:  
; ::  
; 21 Mar 2007 D. A. Gell Initial coding  
; 16 Apr 2007 D. A. Gell correct variable usage  
; 7 Aug 2007 D. A. Gell added Kepler (dust) ram direction  
; 3 Oct 2007 D. A. Gell corrected error in dust ram calculation. Matrix dimension  
; miss-match  
; 24-Mar-2009 DAG Implement global debug switch  
;
```

This too generates a lot of extra white space in the idldoc output including a line with a stand

allow colon.

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Subject: Re: Using IDLdoc to format documentation  
Posted by [Matthew Argall](#) on Wed, 23 Jan 2013 00:05:58 GMT  
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- > If you want to give it a try, take a look at
- > docparprofileparser\_\_define.pro., particularly the \_parseLines method.
- > There are a couple places where you can replace ';' and '+' with the
- > appropriate characters for MATLAB. You will also have to change it from
- > looking for .pro files to looking for MATLAB's extension.

I will (when I have time...)!

Another suggestion is to add at :References: tag in the file documentation. I like to put html links and book names in my more scientific and mathematical code.

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