



CCAPRINT

A Newsletter Excerpt for System 1032 Users

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Loading PC-Format Data Finishing Details

By Tym Stegner

In my previous article, [Loading PC-Format Data into System 1032](#), we diagnosed a LOAD problem caused by a non-VMS data file, and began the process to convert this data into a form that System 1032 can read. In this article, we will continue the process, including:

- Determining record size to fine-tune the FDL file
- Extracting test records from the large original file

Determining Record Length

The previous article concluded with my explanation of how to use the VMS CONVERT command with an FDL file to translate a STREAM format file into a VARIABLE format file. This article begins with the next step: to determine the appropriate record length.

The RD we plan to use to load this data file has a record length of 591 characters. (Note: to see the record length of an RD, use the command SHOW RD <name> FIELD COLUMN, then look at the last entry. Usually this will be the full record length.)

At my request, the customer, who originally asked how to load this large text file, modified the SIZE quality in the RECORD section of the FDL file to be this length:

```
+RECORD
+      BLOCK_SPAN          yes
+      CARRIAGE_CONTROL    carriage_return
+      FORMAT              variable
+      SIZE                 591
```

When the file was modified, the customer used that FDL file with the CONVERT command to translate the data file, then tried to load it into the dataset from System 1032. To reduce the time necessary to test the updated file, I suggested the use of the MAXIMUM option in the LOAD command, to limit the number of records to be read in to only the first 10 records.

Unfortunately, there was still a problem. When the CONVERT command was attempted, the following error occurred:

```
Convert-I-RTL, record longer than maximum record length.
```

Consulting HELP/MESSAGE, I found the following explanation:

```
$ HELP/MESSAGE/FACILITY=CONVERT  RTL
RTL, record longer than Maximum Record Length
Facility:      CONV, Convert Utility
Explanation:   The record from the input file is longer than the
                maximum record length specified in the output file.
                This is an exception condition; the record will not
                be written to the output file. If the /EXIT qualifier
                is specified, processing will stop.
User Action:   Specify the /TRUNCATE qualifier.
```

This suggested to me that the SIZE quality we specified in the FDL file was not adequate. Although 591 bytes is the amount of data to be read into the dataset, it is not necessarily the length of the record in the input file.

Back to the beginning

It seemed as though we had just come back to the beginning with no forward progress. We needed to examine the record to find out how long it actually is, but we could not do that, because we could not open the file in the editor. If we could open the data file, we could inspect a record and check for a LineFeed character, which marks the end-of-record.

So, we discussed two approaches:

- Iteratively specify larger and larger SIZE qualities until one works
- Strip out a few records from the data file to examine them

Extracting Records

So, how can we get a few records out of the file for inspection, when we cannot use the editor to open the file? The DCL command language came to our rescue. The following short DCL program can extract the first 10 records from the file supplied as the first parameter:

```
$! First10.COM
$!
$ rdNum = 0
$ recBuf = "          !working buffer
$ infile = p1
$ open/read ic 'infile
$ open/write oc 'f$parse(infile,,,"NAME")'.TEST
$!
$rdloop:
$ read/end=no_more ic recBuf
$ rdNum = rdNum + 1
$ if rdNum .gt. 10 then goto no_more
$ write oc recBuf
$ goto rdloop
$!
$no_more:
$ close ic
$ close oc
$ dir/date/size 'f$parse(infile,,,"NAME")'.*
$ exit
```

The extracted records were placed in a file with the original name, but with the file-type set to TEST. This much smaller file could now be opened using an editor to inspect the records for record length.

On to LOAD

As it turned out, the incoming file had records that are 700 characters long. The 700 value was set into the FDL file under the SIZE heading, and another CONVERT command was issued. This time the conversion process was successful and created a new file. This new file, when used for the load of the dataset, worked as expected!

Summary

This article concludes the processing of a STREAM file into a VARIABLE format file, suitable for reading into System 1032. As the original file was much too large to be converted using the editor, as was the practice at this site, the CONVERT command and an FDL file were used to reformat the STREAM file into a fixed length VARIABLE format file.