

FOSE1025 — Scientific Computing

Week 7 Lecture 1: Cleaning Data

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Programme

- 1 Cleaning Text Data in Excel
- 2 Cleaning Data in MATLAB

Reading

- These notes
- Readings listed in iLearn — Week 7

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Text as Unstructured Data

- Much of the information you find is input in text.
- People can understand text very easily ...
- ... but not machines!
- Text is often called a kind of **unstructured data**.
- Excel and MATLAB can help find structure from text.



Watch these LinkedIn Learning Videos for Excel



Macquarie University students have access to free videos from LinkedIn Learning. To access these, login using your student credentials. Watch these videos:

- Use Text Functions (5min):

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/excel-2016-cleaning-up-your-data/use-text-functions>

- Use CONCAT and TEXTJOIN functions to combine data (9min):

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/excel-2016-cleaning-up-your-data/use-the-concat-and-textjoin-functions-to-combine-data>

- Combine data via concatenation (9min)

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/excel-2016-cleaning-up-your-data/combine-data-via-concatenation>

- Split data into columns (5min)

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/excel-2016-cleaning-up-your-data/split-data-into-columns-with-the-text-to-columns-feature>

- Using Flash Fill (9min)

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/excel-2016-cleaning-up-your-data/use-flash-fill-for-faster-combining-and-splitting>

Some Useful Text Functions

CH-05.xlsx From <https://www.linkedin.com/learning/excel-2016-cleaning-up-your-data/use-text-functions>

Name	Description
LOWER	Converts all text to lowercase
PROPER	Capitalizes only letters than start the entry or follow a space or punctuation
UPPER	Converts all text to uppercase
REPLACE	Replaces characters within text, based on content, not on character position
SUBSTITUTE	Replaces characters within text, based on character position, not on content
REPT	Repeats text a given number of times
LEFT	Returns the leftmost characters from a text value
MID	Returns a specific number of characters from a text string starting at the position you specify
RIGHT	Returns the rightmost characters from a text value
FIND	Finds one text value within another (case-sensitive)
SEARCH	Finds one text value within another (not case-sensitive)
EXACT	Checks to see if two text values are identical
LEN	Returns the number of characters in a text string
TEXT	Formats a number and converts it to text
VALUE	Converts a text argument to a number
CLEAN	Removes all nonprintable characters from text
TRIM	Removes spaces from text
CONCATENATE	Joins several text items into a cell (on older Excel versions)
CONCAT	Joins several text items into a cell (on newer Excel versions)
DOLLAR	Converts a number to text, using the \$ (dollar) currency format
FIXED	Formats a number as text with a fixed number of decimals

Concatenating Text

Several ways to concatenate text:

- Using the & operator

```
=A1 & " " & B1
```

- CONCAT (in Excel versions from 2016, Mobile, Web)

```
=CONCAT("Stream population for ", A2, " ",  
        A3, " is ", A4, "/mile.")  
=CONCAT(B2:C8)
```

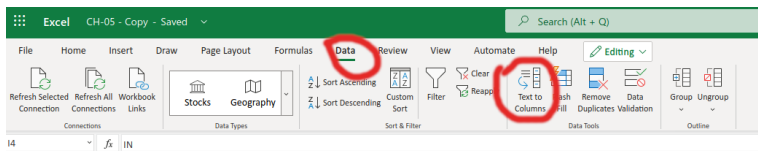
- CONCATENATE (in older Excel versions)
- TEXTJOIN (in Excel versions from 2019, Web — joins text using a text delimiter)

```
=TEXTJOIN(" ", TRUE, "The", "sun", "will", "come",  
          "up", "tomorrow.")  
=TEXTJOIN(" ", TRUE, A2:A8)
```

Parsing Text Using Text to Columns Feature

- Some columns have complex text that needs to be parsed.
- Excel can parse the text of a column and split it into several columns.
- On Excel Online, look at the “Data” tab

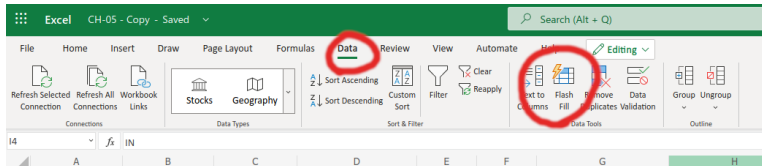
CH-05.xlsx; watch the video <https://www.linkedin.com/learning/excel-2016-cleaning-up-your-data/split-data-into-columns-with-the-text-to-columns-feature>



The Magic of Flash Fill

- Flash Fill is one of Excel's most powerful and least known features.
- Uses AI techniques to try to predict how you want to parse the text.
- Looks like magic, but sometimes might not work for your task.

CH-05.xlsx; watch the video <https://www.linkedin.com/learning/excel-2016-cleaning-up-your-data/use-flash-fill-for-faster-combining-and-splitting>



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MATLAB's Column Types I

<https://au.mathworks.com/help/matlab/data-types.html>

- All values of a MATLAB table column are of the same type.
- Common types in MATLAB are:

Numeric

- `double` — This is the default numerical type. It is what is called `double-precision floating point`.
- There are other types that you can use to represent integers (with or without sign) and other numerical types.

MATLAB's Column Types II

<https://au.mathworks.com/help/matlab/data-types.html>

Text

- `string` — Starting in MATLAB's version R2016b, this is the preferred way to store text. It's called “string arrays”.
- `char` — Available in all MATLAB versions but not recommended from MATLAB version R2016b. It's called “character arrays”.

Dates and Time

- `datetime` — MATLAB stores dates and times using the same format.
- We will look at MATLAB's dates and times in a subsequent lecture.

MATLAB's Column Types III

<https://au.mathworks.com/help/matlab/data-types.html>

Categorical

- Use this type (instead of, say, `string`), if you know that the column has a finite set of possible values.
- For example, `C = categorical({'R','G','B','B','G','B'})` creates a categorical array with six elements that belong to the categories R, G, or B.

Examining the Type of a Table Column

File: mlb_players.csv

- MATLAB's `summary` function gives a summary of a table.
- It reports various information, including the types of all of its columns.

Try This

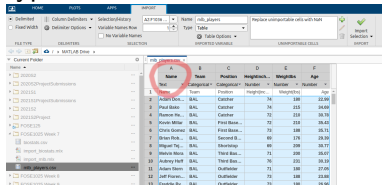
- 1 Use (or generate) the live script that imports the file `mlb_players.csv` and stores the generated table in the variable `mlb_players.csv`.
- 2 Add this command to the live script (without `;"` at the end):

```
summary(mlb_players)
```

Text or string?

Depending on what part of MATLAB you use, it may say that a column type is “Text” or “string”. They are the same!

If using the text import tool you may see that the column type is “text”.



If using `summary` you may see that the same column type is “string”.

```
>> summary(mlb_players)
```

Variables:

Name: 1035x1 string

Team: 1035x1 categorical

Setting the Type in a Table Column



File: mlb_players.csv

- A common problem with MATLAB (and Excel) is that the default settings when reading a CSV file might not be correct.
 - For example, by default, `readtable` may store text as a character array, not a string array.
- If we use MATLAB's import tool we can specify the data type (see lecture week 6).
 - Check how the generated script defines options to the `readtable` function.
- We can also change the data type **after** the table has been created.

```
mlb.Team = categorical(mlb.Team);  
mlb.Name = string(mlb.Name);
```

<https://au.mathworks.com/help/matlab/data-type-conversion.html>

Filtering Data in an Array



- MATLAB can identify what values meet a particular condition.
- For example, to find what elements in an array "ages" are larger than 10:

```
>> ages = [1 2 5 34 2 32];  
>> ages > 10  
ans =  
    1x6 logical array  
    0    0    0    1    0    1
```

- The result is a filter represented as a **logical array**: each element is either 0 ("false") or 1 ("true").
- We can now select all elements whose corresponding logical array indicates true.

```
>> ages(ages > 10)  
ans =  
    34    32
```

Filtering Data in a Table

File trees.csv

- The same process can be used to select rows whose columns meet a particular condition.

```
>> trees.Girth_in_ > 15
ans =
    31x1 logical array
    0 0 0 ... 1 1 1
>> wide_trees = trees(trees.Girth_in_ > 15, :)
```

- We can combine multiple filters by using Boolean operators.
- Can you tell what's the output of the following?

```
>> trees = readtable("trees.csv");
>> filtera = trees.Girth_in_ > 10;
>> filterb = trees.Girth_in_ < 15;
>> filterc = trees.Height_ft_ > 70;
>> result = trees(filtera & filterb | filterc, :)
```

Take-home Messages

Excel

- Fixing problems from manual data input.
- Importing text.
- Text to columns feature.
- Flash Fill.

MATLAB

- Changing data types.
- Text functions.
- Filtering data.

What's Next

- Friday 9 September: Communicator hurdle
- 2 weeks without classes, time to catch up!
- The project will be released during the break
 - 30% of the unit assessment
 - Submit by 19 October
- Week 8 lecture (26 September): Transforming Data