Data Input

Description

Reads a file in table format and creates a data frame from it, with cases corresponding to lines and variables to fields in the file.

Usage

```
read.table(file, header = FALSE, sep = "", quote = "\"'",
           dec = ".", numerals = c("allow.loss", "warn.loss", "no.loss"),
           row.names, col.names, as.is = !stringsAsFactors,
           na.strings = "NA", colClasses = NA, nrows = -1,
           skip = 0, check.names = TRUE, fill = !blank.lines.skip,
           strip.white = FALSE, blank.lines.skip = TRUE,
           comment.char = "#",
           allowEscapes = FALSE, flush = FALSE,
           stringsAsFactors = default.stringsAsFactors(),
           fileEncoding = "", encoding = "unknown", text, skipNul = FALSE)

read.csv(file, header = TRUE, sep = ",", quote = "\"",
         dec = ".", fill = TRUE, comment.char = "", ...)

read.csv2(file, header = TRUE, sep = ";", quote = "\"",
          dec = ",", fill = TRUE, comment.char = "", ...)

read.delim(file, header = TRUE, sep = "\t", quote = "\"",
           dec = ".", fill = TRUE, comment.char = "", ...)

read.delim2(file, header = TRUE, sep = "\t", quote = "\"",
            dec = ",", fill = TRUE, comment.char = "", ...)
```

Arguments

`file`	the name of the file which the data are to be read from. Each row of the table appears as one line of the file. If it does not contain an *absolute* path, the file name is *relative* to the current working directory, `getwd()`. Tilde-expansion is performed where supported. This can be a compressed file (see `file`). Alternatively, `file` can be a readable text-mode connection (which will be opened for reading if necessary, and if so `close`d (and hence destroyed) at the end of the function call). (If `stdin()` is used, the prompts for lines may be somewhat confusing. Terminate input with a blank line or an EOF signal, `Ctrl-D` on Unix and `Ctrl-Z` on Windows. Any pushback on `stdin()` will be cleared before return.) `file` can also be a complete URL. (For the supported URL schemes, see the 'URLs' section of the help for `url`.)
`header`	a logical value indicating whether the file contains the names of the variables as its first line. If missing, the value is determined from the file

format: `header` is set to `TRUE` if and only if the first row contains one fewer field than the number of columns.

`sep` — the field separator character. Values on each line of the file are separated by this character. If `sep = ""` (the default for `read.table`) the separator is 'white space', that is one or more spaces, tabs, newlines or carriage returns.

`quote` — the set of quoting characters. To disable quoting altogether, use `quote = ""`. See `scan` for the behaviour on quotes embedded in quotes. Quoting is only considered for columns read as character, which is all of them unless `colClasses` is specified.

`dec` — the character used in the file for decimal points.

`numerals` — string indicating how to convert numbers whose conversion to double precision would lose accuracy, see `type.convert`.

`row.names` — a vector of row names. This can be a vector giving the actual row names, or a single number giving the column of the table which contains the row names, or character string giving the name of the table column containing the row names.

If there is a header and the first row contains one fewer field than the number of columns, the first column in the input is used for the row names. Otherwise if `row.names` is missing, the rows are numbered.

Using `row.names = NULL` forces row numbering. Missing or `NULL` `row.names` generate row names that are considered to be 'automatic' (and not preserved by `as.matrix`).

`col.names` — a vector of optional names for the variables. The default is to use `"V"` followed by the column number.

`as.is` — the default behavior of `read.table` is to convert character variables (which are not converted to logical, numeric or complex) to factors. The variable `as.is` controls the conversion of columns not otherwise specified by `colClasses`. Its value is either a vector of logicals (values are recycled if necessary), or a vector of numeric or character indices which specify which columns should not be converted to factors.

Note: to suppress all conversions including those of numeric columns, set `colClasses = "character"`.

Note that `as.is` is specified per column (not per variable) and so includes the column of row names (if any) and any columns to be skipped.

`na.strings` — a character vector of strings which are to be interpreted as `NA` values. Blank fields are also considered to be missing values in logical, integer, numeric and complex fields.

`colClasses` — character. A vector of classes to be assumed for the columns. Recycled as necessary, or if the character vector is named, unspecified values are taken to be `NA`.

Possible values are `NA` (the default, when `type.convert` is used), `"NULL"` (when the column is skipped), one of the atomic vector classes (logical, integer, numeric, complex, character, raw), or `"factor"`, `"Date"` or `"POSIXct"`. Otherwise there needs to be an `as` method (from package **methods**) for conversion from `"character"` to the specified formal class.

Note that `colClasses` is specified per column (not per variable) and so includes the column of row names (if any).

`nrows` — integer: the maximum number of rows to read in. Negative and other invalid

	values are ignored.
skip	integer: the number of lines of the data file to skip before beginning to read data.
check.names	logical. If TRUE then the names of the variables in the data frame are checked to ensure that they are syntactically valid variable names. If necessary they are adjusted (by make.names) so that they are, and also to ensure that there are no duplicates.
fill	logical. If TRUE then in case the rows have unequal length, blank fields are implicitly added. See 'Details'.
strip.white	logical. Used only when sep has been specified, and allows the stripping of leading and trailing white space from unquoted character fields (numeric fields are always stripped). See scan for further details (including the exact meaning of 'white space'), remembering that the columns may include the row names.
blank.lines.skip	logical: if TRUE blank lines in the input are ignored.
comment.char	character: a character vector of length one containing a single character or an empty string. Use "" to turn off the interpretation of comments altogether.
allowEscapes	logical. Should C-style escapes such as \n be processed or read verbatim (the default)? Note that if not within quotes these could be interpreted as a delimiter (but not as a comment character). For more details see scan.
flush	logical: if TRUE, scan will flush to the end of the line after reading the last of the fields requested. This allows putting comments after the last field.
stringsAsFactors	logical: should character vectors be converted to factors? Note that this is overridden by as.is and colClasses, both of which allow finer control.
fileEncoding	character string: if non-empty declares the encoding used on a file (not a connection) so the character data can be re-encoded. See the 'Encoding' section of the help for file, the 'R Data Import/Export Manual' and 'Note'.
encoding	encoding to be assumed for input strings. It is used to mark character strings as known to be in Latin-1 or UTF-8 (see Encoding): it is not used to re-encode the input, but allows R to handle encoded strings in their native encoding (if one of those two). See 'Value' and 'Note'.
text	character string: if file is not supplied and this is, then data are read from the value of text via a text connection. Notice that a literal string can be used to include (small) data sets within R code.
skipNul	logical: should nuls be skipped?
...	Further arguments to be passed to read.table.

Details

This function is the principal means of reading tabular data into R.

Unless colClasses is specified, all columns are read as character columns and then converted using type.convert to logical, integer, numeric, complex or (depending on as.is) factor as appropriate. Quotes are (by default) interpreted in all fields, so a column of values like "42" will result in an integer column.

A field or line is 'blank' if it contains nothing (except whitespace if no separator is specified) before a comment character or the end of the field or line.

If row.names is not specified and the header line has one less entry than the number of columns, the first column is taken to be the row names. This allows data frames to be read in from the format in which they are printed. If row.names is specified and does not refer to the first column,

that column is discarded from such files.

The number of data columns is determined by looking at the first five lines of input (or the whole file if it has less than five lines), or from the length of `col.names` if it is specified and is longer. This could conceivably be wrong if `fill` or `blank.lines.skip` are true, so specify `col.names` if necessary (as in the 'Examples').

`read.csv` and `read.csv2` are identical to `read.table` except for the defaults. They are intended for reading 'comma separated value' files ('`.csv`') or (`read.csv2`) the variant used in countries that use a comma as decimal point and a semicolon as field separator. Similarly, `read.delim` and `read.delim2` are for reading delimited files, defaulting to the TAB character for the delimiter. Notice that `header = TRUE` and `fill = TRUE` in these variants, and that the comment character is disabled.

The rest of the line after a comment character is skipped; quotes are not processed in comments. Complete comment lines are allowed provided `blank.lines.skip = TRUE`; however, comment lines prior to the header must have the comment character in the first non-blank column.

Quoted fields with embedded newlines are supported except after a comment character. Embedded nuls are unsupported: skipping them (with `skipNul = TRUE`) may work.

Value

A data frame (`data.frame`) containing a representation of the data in the file.

Empty input is an error unless `col.names` is specified, when a 0-row data frame is returned: similarly giving just a header line if `header = TRUE` results in a 0-row data frame. Note that in either case the columns will be logical unless `colClasses` was supplied.

Character strings in the result (including factor levels) will have a declared encoding if `encoding` is `"latin1"` or `"UTF-8"`.

Memory usage

These functions can use a surprising amount of memory when reading large files. There is extensive discussion in the 'R Data Import/Export' manual, supplementing the notes here.

Less memory will be used if `colClasses` is specified as one of the six atomic vector classes. This can be particularly so when reading a column that takes many distinct numeric values, as storing each distinct value as a character string can take up to 14 times as much memory as storing it as an integer.

Using `nrows`, even as a mild over-estimate, will help memory usage.

Using `comment.char = ""` will be appreciably faster than the `read.table` default.

`read.table` is not the right tool for reading large matrices, especially those with many columns: it is designed to read *data frames* which may have columns of very different classes. Use `scan` instead for matrices.

Note

The columns referred to in `as.is` and `colClasses` include the column of row names (if any).

There are two approaches for reading input that is not in the local encoding. If the input is known to be UTF-8 or Latin1, use the `encoding` argument to declare that. If the input is in some other encoding, then it may be translated on input. The `fileEncoding` argument achieves this by

setting up a connection to do the re-encoding into the current locale. Note that on Windows or other systems not running in a UTF-8 locale, this may not be possible.

References

Chambers, J. M. (1992) *Data for models.* Chapter 3 of *Statistical Models in S* eds J. M. Chambers and T. J. Hastie, Wadsworth & Brooks/Cole.

See Also

The 'R Data Import/Export' manual.

`scan`, `type.convert`, `read.fwf` for reading *f*ixed *w*idth *f*ormatted input; `write.table`; `data.frame`.

`count.fields` can be useful to determine problems with reading files which result in reports of incorrect record lengths (see the 'Examples' below).

http://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc4180 for the IANA definition of CSV files (which requires comma as separator and CRLF line endings).

Examples

```
## using count.fields to handle unknown maximum number of fields
## when fill = TRUE
test1 <- c(1:5, "6,7", "8,9,10")
tf <- tempfile()
writeLines(test1, tf)

read.csv(tf, fill = TRUE) # 1 column
ncol <- max(count.fields(tf, sep = ","))
read.csv(tf, fill = TRUE, header = FALSE,
         col.names = paste0("V", seq_len(ncol)))
unlink(tf)

## "Inline" data set, using text=
## Notice that leading and trailing empty lines are auto-trimmed

read.table(header = TRUE, text = "
a b
1 2
3 4
")
```
