

Handling of White Spaces When Parsing Flat Files With Fixed Length



This page explains the **Flat File Adapter** in Bridge context. If you were looking for the same information regarding the [PAS Designer](#), refer to [Flat File Adapter](#) in the Designer guide.

Assume you want to parse a fixed position flat file that contains a field for which the value "space" is a valid content and does not mean that this field is empty.

Have a look at the example flat file below. It contains 4 fields: customer (20), country code (2), country name (30) and order balance. For a better visualization, spaces are highlighted by an underscore sign.

A Flat File with Two Records

```
Wishes_Unltd_____F_France_____
All you can buy Inc__Switzerland_____
```

This can be a problem, because as per default, the flat file parser assumes that "space" is the fill character. The parser will strip off all trailing spaces before parsing the records to objects. If a field consists of the fill character only (as does country code in record two), the attribute will be returned as NULL.

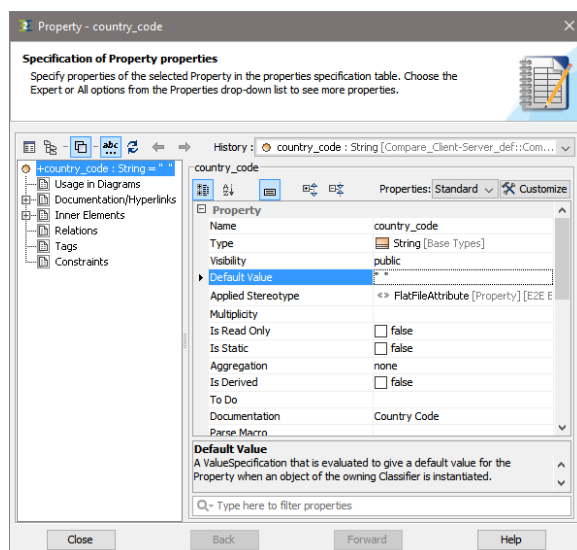
You will get as a result:

Parsed Objects (Json)

```
{
  "customer" : "Wishes Unltd";
  "country_code" : "F";
  "country_name" : "France";
}
{
  "customer" : "All you can buy Inc";
  "country_name": "Switzerland";
}
```

Avoiding this is very easy. Set a default value on the affected attribute.

Figure: Setting a Default Value On a Flat File Attribute



After you have set a default value of e.g. " ", the new result will be:

Related Pages:

- [Flat File Adapter Reference](#)

Other Common Flat File Issues:

- [Flat File Records Without Data](#)
- [Flat File With Header Lines](#)
- [Handling of Empty Lines When Composing a Flat File](#)
- [Handling of White Spaces When Parsing Flat Files With Fixed Length](#)
- [Mapping of Hierarchical Record Structures](#)
- [Using Patterns to Separate Attributes](#)

Parsed Objects (Json)

```
{
  "customer" : "Wishes Unltd";
  "country_code" : "F";
  "country_name" : "France";
}
{
  "customer" : "All you can buy Inc";
  "country_code" : " ";
  "country_name": "Switzerland";
}
```

Please note, that this example will be a little different, if you additionally use padding, e.g. `right(" ")` on the affected attribute. Using padding will trim off leading or trailing spaces and result in an empty attribute instead of `NULL` or default value.