Handling of White Spaces When Parsing Flat Files With Fixed Length

(i)

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 NI II I

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

```
Property - country_code
  Specify properties of the selected Property in the properties specification table. Choose the Expert or All options from the Properties drop-down list to see more properties.
□ 🔁 - 🛅 - 🌬 🗸 🖨 → History: 🐧 country_code : String [Compare_Client-Server_def::Com... ∨
                               country_code
    Usage in Diagrams
                                          Usage in Diagrams
Documentation/Hyperlinks
Documents
Inner Elements
Tags
Constraints
                                                                                      Properties: Standard V 🛠 Customize
                                          ☐ Property
                                                                                     country code
                                             Туре
                                                                                     String [Base Types]
                                           Visibility

Default
                                                                                     public
                                             Applied Stereotype
                                                                                     «» FlatFileAttribute [Property] [E2E E
                                             Multiplicity
                                             Is Read Only
                                                                                     false false
                                              Is Static
                                              Aggregation
                                             Is Derived
                                                                                     ☐ false
                                             To Do
                                             Documentation
                                                                                     Country Code
                                         Default Value
A ValueSpecification that is evaluated to give a default value for the Property when an object of the owning Classifier is instantiated.
```

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. ${\tt right}("")$ 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.