

How to handle/strip out Quotes around string columns that can be null when using bcp to import csv files?

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I am trying to import data from third party CSV files that contain quotes around string ([varchar] and [char]) columns. To allow BCP (SQL 2000 version) to handle/strip out the quotes I am using format files that specify quotes as part of the column delimiters. I can't just preprocess the text to remove the quotes because the string columns may include commas.

Example format file:

```
1 SQLCHAR 0 0 "\",\" 1 c1 ""
2 SQLCHAR 0 0 "\"\",\" 2 c2 ""
3 SQLCHAR 0 0 "\"\n" 3 c3 ""
```

This works pretty well for the following text:

```
111,"Winken,Blinken,Nod","aaa"
```

The problem is that if one of the string columns values is null\empty [,] bcp doesn't find the delimiter since it's expecting a quote-comma [",] delimiter. E.g.:

```
111,,"aaa"
```

This results in a bcp error due to not finding the quote-comma delimiter! Is there something I can specify in the format file to make the quote an optional part of the delimiter? Can I specify an alternate delimiter for a column? Is there a better way to do this? This is part of a larger automated process located on a different server than the DB so if possible I would like to continue to use bcp...

Thanks,
David