

Is the character string not in a standard unambiguous format?

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The phrase "Is the character string not in a standard unambiguous format?" refers to the uncertainty surrounding the structure and clarity of a particular character string. This means that the string may not adhere to commonly accepted conventions or may lack clarity and precision, making it difficult to interpret or use. The use of the word "not" implies that the string does not meet the criteria for being considered in a standard, unambiguous format. In other words, there is a level of ambiguity or confusion surrounding the string that needs to be addressed. This phrase is often used in technical or formal settings to question the validity and reliability of a character string.

Fix: character string is not in a standard unambiguous format

One common error you may encounter in R is:

**Error in as.POSIXlt.character(x, tz, ...) :
character string is not in a standard unambiguous format**

This error usually occurs when you attempt to convert an object in R to a date format, but the object is currently either a character or factor.

To fix this error, you must first convert the object to numeric.

This tutorial explains how to fix this error in practice.

How to Reproduce the Error

Suppose we have the following data frame in R:

```
#create data frame
```

```
df <- data.frame(date=c('1459397140', '1464397220',  
'1513467142'),  
sales=c(140, 199, 243))
```

```
#view data frame
```

```
df
```

```
date sales
```

```
1 1459397140 140
```

```
2 1464397220 199
```

```
3 1513467142 243
```

Now suppose we attempt to convert the values in the date column to a date format:

```
#attempt to convert values in date column to date
```

```
df$date <- as.POSIXct(df$date, origin='1970-01-01')
```

```
Error in as.POSIXlt.character(x, tz, ...) :
```

```
character string is not in a standard unambiguous  
format
```

We receive an error because the values in the date column are currently in a character format, which the

as.POSIXct() function doesn't know how to handle.

How to Fix the Error

To fix this error, we need to use **as.numeric()** to first convert the values in the date column to a numeric format, which is one that **as.POSIXct** can handle:

```
#convert values in date column to date  
df$date <-  
as.POSIXct(as.numeric(as.character(df$date)),  
origin='1970-01-01')
```

```
#view updated data frame  
df
```

```
date sales  
1 2016-03-31 04:05:40 140  
2 2016-05-28 01:00:20 199  
3 2017-12-16 23:32:22 243
```

This time we don't receive an error and we're able to successfully convert the values in the date column to a date format because we first converted the values to a numeric format.

The following tutorials explain how to fix other common errors in R:

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