

sscanf question

I have a question about sscanf() lecture.

On the lecture note, there is a code that reads the format of "h:m:s"

```
sscanf(l.c_str(), "%d:%d:%d", &h, &m, &s);
```

And I was wondering why it cannot store h, m, and s when the input is "abcdef 12:34:56" and how can I make it work?

Thank you!

the instructors' answer,

where instructors collectively construct a single answer

If s = "abcdef 12:34:56", and you want to read the "12:34:56" part, then there are two avenues to go down.

1. Use a C++ stringstream, or perhaps the find() and substr() methods of C++ strings to isolate the "12:23:56" into it's own C++ string. Then use the sscanf() call above. This is what I'd recommend.
2. (Not recommended, but I'm putting it here in case someone recommends it). If you know that there is a single string in front of the time, **and you know how big it is**, then you can do:

```
sscanf(l.c_str(), "%s %d:%d:%d", buf, &h, &m, &s);
```

buf will need to be a c-style array of bytes that is big enough to hold the initial string (plus the NULL character). The reason I don't recommend this is that if you mess up, and buf is too small, you open yourself up to memory corruption and buffer overflow attacks. You'll learn more about that in CS360. -- JP