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Subject: Re: will RSI support HDF5?

Posted by [Phillip David](#) on Tue, 23 Oct 2001 10:02:36 GMT

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H C Pumphrey wrote:

- > Let's just spell that out again in words of one syllable:
- > HDF5 is NOT the next version of HDF4.[1] Apart from the facts that
- > they are both file formats for storing large wads of scientific data,
- > and
- > that they both come from NCSA, they are totally and utterly different
- > things.
- >
- > Struan Gray spoke thusly:
- >> My impression is that RSI is more interested in servicing its few
- >> large customers than using people like me to kick-start interest in
- >> IDL among new users. So be it.
- >
- > Now, NASA's EOS program is (a) a Large IDL customer, and (b) is
- > actively switching from HDF4 to HDF5. Do I have to go on?

RSI has given us the impression that XonTech IS a large customer (we have something like 40 licenses to IDL; most are for Windows, but a few are for Macs. We're porting things over to Linux for some of our codes, and really need HDF5 support NOW. We've been asking for the last ... let's see ... about 2 years to get this. So apparently, being a big customer isn't enough. Telling them that it's important didn't do it either. We keep hearing "In version 6, we'll have HDF5 support", but then we keep getting more version 5 releases instead.

Now, with the dropping of plans for supporting Mac OSX and Alpha, and the future of other Unix platforms possibly hanging in the balance, we're going to have to look seriously at other options available to us.

Currently, one of the most promising for our work is VisAD. This is a client/server tool written in Java that currently supports HDF5, and would work well to assist us with visualizing our data from a central data facility without needing to transfer all of the data across our internet lines. Instead, we'd just transfer over the actual images. And Java's been optimized to do that very efficiently.

It sounds like we're not the only ones looking into alternatives to IDL, and I'm betting that RSI's recent announcements are only going to speed the demise of sales they're experiencing.

I hope I'm wrong.

