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Subject: Re: CDF vs HDF

Posted by [david.b.han](#) on Thu, 01 Apr 2004 13:10:10 GMT

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Michael Wallace <[mwallace.removethis@swri.edu.invalid](mailto:mwallace.removethis@swri.edu.invalid)> wrote in message news:<[106jn2q11rcsp51@corp.supernews.com](mailto:106jn2q11rcsp51@corp.supernews.com)>...

> This isn't an IDL question exactly, but I figured that there are several  
> here who have to deal with these file types. Is there any real  
> difference between CDF and HDF? I have looked at some web pages that  
> describe the differences, but it doesn't mean much to me since I've  
> never delved into either one. The only reason I'm even looking at these  
> file types is that these seem to be the types preferred by the data  
> center we will be working with later on for long-term archival of our  
> data. If it means anything, my core data sets are nothing more than  
> really big arrays. Later on, other data like PNG images may be included.  
>  
> Unless there's some big difference between the two, I'm going to go with  
> the one that's easier to work with in IDL. So, that brings me to the  
> question, is one easier to work with than the other? Or do I flip a  
> coin to determine which one to use?  
>  
> -Mike

Both CDF and netCDF are much easier to learn and use than HDF and CDF is a superset of netCDF, not the other way around. Both IDL and MatLab have a built-in support for CDF, and there's a suite of IDL routines with which you can manipulate CDF files (e.g. read, write, plot, etc.) at <http://spdf.gsfc.nasa.gov/CDAWlib.html>.

There's a data format translator at <http://translators.gsfc.nasa.gov> that allows users to translate files between CDF, netCDF, and FITS.

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