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Subject: Re: Reading HDF5 Variable

Posted by [Paul Van Delst\[1\]](#) on Mon, 14 Feb 2005 21:35:44 GMT

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Michael Wallace wrote:

>> At the risk of starting a flame war, the netCDF interface (about 25  
>> functions) seems to have been written by scientists for scientists,  
>> while the HDF interface appears to have been written by programmers  
>> for programmers (hundreds(?) of functions).  
>  
>  
> The various problems with HDF are what led me to use netCDF. Not only  
> are they written "by scientists for scientists" but much of the  
> underpinnings of the format appear to have been written by "computer  
> scientists rather than scientists." Issues with the format aside, I  
> just like the fact that there are \*stable, working\* netCDF access  
> routines in IDL, Java, C, Perl, Python, etc. In fact, whenever I have  
> to work with HDF, the first thing I usually do is write a small  
> conversion program that converts the file to netCDF and then I work with  
> it from there. :-)

Hey - me too! Except rather than write a conversion program each time, I just pipe the  
hdfdump[\*] utility output into the ncgen utility to convert files I use. E.g.

```
hdfdump <hdf> | ncgen -b <ncfile>
```

and I end up with a nice simple, useful netCDF file. :o)

paulv

[\*] Earlier HDF libraries called this "ncdump" which was very annoying.

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