
Subject: Re: Reading HDF5 Variable

Posted by [James Kuyper](#) on Tue, 15 Feb 2005 00:43:03 GMT

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David Fanning wrote:

- > Folks,
- >
- > Does anyone know if it is even *possible* to learn how
- > to access a variable from an HDF5 file from the IDL
- > documentation!?

I'm not sure what you mean by a "variable". HDF5 files contain groups, which can contain datasets, and virtually any HDF5 feature can have an attribute. I'll assume you're talking about a dataset.

- > I really don't have a week to figure this out. Does
- > anyone have a simple example. I can see and access
- > the data with H5_QUERY. But I can't make any sense
- > of the palette that is suppose to be attached to the
- > data. It is 976 elements long. That doesn't even
- > begin to divide by 256. :-(
- >
- > What I am trying to do is extract a 2D image and its
- > accompanying palette in order to build and save a JPEG
- > file. (Typically I don't mind spending hours and hours
- > researching a topic, but the FAFSA Student Aid forms
- > are due today and I'm working on income taxes. :-(

I didn't know much of anything about HDF5 a few minutes ago, but I am quite familiar with HDF4. The IDL interface for HDF5 is sufficiently similar to the one for HDF4 that it didn't take me long to figure out the following from the IDL documentation. However, I have no easy way to obtain a test file to try it with. Since you're having problems, and this was so trivial, I presume that it either doesn't work, or that you're talking about something else.

```
file_id = H5F_Open(filename)
dataset_id = H5D_Open(file_id, dataset_name)
data = H5D_Read(dataset_id)
H5D_Close, dataset_id
H5F_Close, file_id
```
