
Subject: Re: HDF_Browser Woes

Posted by [Benjamin Hornberger](#) on Thu, 03 May 2007 16:21:16 GMT

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David Fanning wrote:

> Folks,

>

> Does anyone have the foggiest idea of how HDF_BROWSER works?

> I'm trying to figure out what is in an unknown HDF file.

> When I select the READ button, something is returned,

> but I can make no sense of it whatsoever. Help (or suggestions

> for using something OTHER than HDF_BROWSER) is appreciated.

I can tell you how (little) I used `hdf_read()`. I believe `hdf_browser()` can produce a template to subsequently open several files of the same type / structure with `hdf_read()` without going through what I describe below each time.

I open `hdf_read()` and pick a file. The text field on the upper left tells you what's in the file (attributes, datasets etc.), which you can select by doubleclicking. You can also use the dropdown list to show only a selection. If you select an attribute, dataset or whatever, you can preview it in the window on the upper right. The preview is kind of limited, however. For example, byte/char arrays representing strings are plotted (funny, isn't it?) in one netCDF file I am testing right now (yes, it also supports netCDF).

In the lower half of the window, once you have selected an attribute / dataset / whatever, you can choose to extract (read) it and give a name.

Once you click OK, the return value of `hdf_read()` is a structure with the fields containing the stuff you have extracted (read). For example, if you do

```
data=hdf_read(file)
```

and then extract attribute 1 as 'a' and dataset 2 as 'b', in the end you'll have a structure 'data' with fields 'a' and 'b'.

Hope that helps,
Benjamin
