Subject: IDL & reading headers of netCDF files
Posted by chloesharrocks on Tue, 08 Jan 2008 10:46:02 GMT
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I'm a 4th year Physics UG trying to get to grips with IDL ready for my research project involving atmospheric data next term. I'm trying to read the header contents of some netCDF files and am at a complete loss (it doens't help that I have never worked with netCDF files before and don't know what I'm actually trying to look for!). I have done some very basic C-Programming before, but am a novice at programming and have no exerience with UNIX.

I've been using Liam Gumley's book and have read the section on reading and writing netCDF files but can't get the information I want. I've managed to obtain a list of the variables my files contain, but my supervisors have asked me to use the ncdump -h command to read what the header is. So here are my problems:

1. I'm a Mac OS X user so have tried during the ncdump - h command in my terminal but it fails. I understand this is because I need some netCDF software on my computer. I tried to download this but got completely lost in the detailed instructions relating to Unix - it seemed to imply that I required a C-compiler on my computer for the installation to work (I don't have a C-compiler) and the files it told me to use did not exist in the folder I had just downloaded.

2. Is there any way of avoiding UNIX and being able to read the contents of the header directly in IDL's Development Environment?

3. I have downloaded Panoply (http://www.giss.nasa.gov/tools/panoply/) which seems to open the netCDF files very easily and provides me with information about the variables contained and also seems to be able to plot data onto maps very easily. Is this essentially doing what the ncdump - h command does?

If anyone could guide me through a step-by-step guide to downloading the netCDF software onto my Mac and also letting me know whether I can do the equivalent command directly in IDLDE I would be very grateful.

Thanks
Chloé