

---

Subject: Re: New netCDF Browser

Posted by [Benjamin Hornberger](#) on Mon, 04 Feb 2008 20:03:14 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

David Fanning wrote:

> Folks,  
>  
> I have been working with netCDF files recently, and I have been  
> bothered by the lack of a decent way to browse the contents of  
> these files. I've found decent software to read the variables  
> out of these files, but you have to know the names of the  
> variables you want to read, and I often don't. I've tried  
> using the HDF\_BROWSER, but that interface is god-awful  
> ugly, not to mention non-intuitive, and I don't like it.  
>  
> So I wrote my own netCDF Browser. All you do is pass it  
> the name of the file and it can parse all the data and  
> metadata in the file and it will give you a graphical  
> view of it. Select a variable you want to read, and the  
> browser will read the variable and put it into a variable  
> at the main IDL level for you.  
>  
> Most of the functionality is built into a NCDF\_DATA  
> object. This gives the user great flexibility and functionality  
> to work with netCDF files. But I think most users will  
> use the NCDF\_BROWSER front end. This is just an IDL procedure  
> that takes the name of a netCDF file. It does everything else,  
> including cleanup up after itself.  
>  
> I have some ideas for cosmetic updates, but before I implement  
> them, I thought I would try to get some feedback to see if the  
> browser works with everyone's netCDF files. They have worked  
> with all I've tried, but I haven't subjected them to newbie  
> programming pressure yet. :-)  
>  
> If you are interested, you can find all the Coyote programs  
> you need here:  
>  
> [http://www.dfanning.com/programs/ncdf\\_browser.zip](http://www.dfanning.com/programs/ncdf_browser.zip)  
>  
> To run the basic program, just pass the filename of a netCDF  
> file to the program, like this:  
>  
> IDL> nCDF\_BROWSER, file  
>  
> Always interested in your feedback.  
>  
> Cheers,

>  
> David

Hi David,

the program is great! It had always annoyed me that `hdf_browser()` will block the whole IDL session and you can't do anything else without closing the browser.

Some quick suggestions, if you decide to spend more time on it:

1. It would be great if the window on the right that displays the contents would resize if the program window is resized
2. We give our own extension to the netcdf files our instruments produce, so it would be great if one could pass a keyword specifying the default extensions that are preselected in the `dialog_pickfile` window.
3. It looks like I can't export a single global attribute to a variable on the IDL main level, only all of them in a structure. I think it would make sense to be able to export them one by one.

Cheers,  
Benjamin

---