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Subject: Best form factor for a NetCDF package of a dataset  
Posted by [MarioIncandenza](#) on Sat, 18 Jul 2009 00:08:50 GMT  
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Hello data wizards,

I have a largish dataset that I have been tossing around in ASCII, but now have been asked to package as NetCDF. It consists of hourly model output (8 variables) at 1-degree resolution. The catch is that for any given hour, there is no data for ~90% of the globe. Thus, to package the data as grids would waste a lot of space on zeroes. However, if I simply package it in a "list" form, the amount of data in each file will vary, and that may create headaches for people using it.

The "list" form would be analogous to HDF-EOS "Swath" products, which I have used successfully. The "grid" form would be, well, a grid.

As data users, how strongly do you prefer data in simple grids? Would you be willing to accept 8x the data volume (compressed) in exchange for a simpler format?

Looking to collect \$0.02,

--Edward H.

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