
Subject: Re: CDF vs. netCDF

Posted by [David Foster](#) on Fri, 14 Mar 1997 08:00:00 GMT

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Michael Ochs wrote:

>
> We are converting a moderately large set of programs to
> IDL for distribution. I am reviewing options for the
> data format to use and downloaded the CDF and netCDF
> user's guides. What is not clear from what I have seen
> are the advantages and disadvantages to the two formats.
>
> Any comments on this would be useful. Our software handles
> large MRI images and spectra (thus IDL) and is going to
> be designed to run on many platforms (thus IDL again). One
> thing I would like to know is whether netCDF adds significantly
> to file size and how both compare to using IDL's unformatted
> routines like ASSOC.
>

I have been writing software for analysis of MRI images at UCSD for quite some time, and have never encountered the need for CDF or netCDF. Of course, we are using UNIX systems exclusively, but I would still recommend keeping your MR images in their native format. There are other tools (and some IDL "shareware") that will expect your data to be in native form (GE Cigna?).

For I/O, we're just using plain vanilla unformatted binary READU/WRITEU. When we need access to the entire series, we read the images into a 3D volume. You could concatenate the images into a single volume file of some sort, but then you lose the header information that comes with the images (and we haven't really found a good reason to use ASSOC; the speed improvement isn't that much compared to binary reads of individual images).

Good luck!

Dave

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David S. Foster      Univ. of California, San Diego  
Programmer/Analyst   Brain Image Analysis Laboratory  
foster@bial1.ucsd.edu   Department of Psychiatry  
(619) 622-5892      8950 Via La Jolla Drive, Suite 2200  
                         La Jolla, CA 92037  
                         [ UCSD Mail Code 0949 ]

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