
Subject: HDF frustrations

Posted by [Michael Wallace](#) on Fri, 20 Feb 2004 21:59:29 GMT

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My education in IDL continues. Today's lesson is HDF files. I had never heard of HDF, let alone try to work with it before now. (Boo!) But, it appears that IDL already had a fair number of HDF functions. (Yea!) But, the documentation makes absolutely zero sense. (Boo!) But there's always help at the IDL newsgroup. (Yea!) ... It's Friday afternoon and I'm in a weird mood.

Anyway, someone far away on this vast internet was gracious enough to make some of his data available, but he created HDF files (with ample documentation of what all the fields mean). Maybe it's because I don't understand the HDF format itself, but I couldn't find any coherent explanation of the IDL API to HDF. In the past hour or so, I've only managed to determine that there are 13 tags in the file in question. And I've found which tags are being referenced. I tried using HDF_Browser to create a template for me, and I can see the field names and such, but there's nothing to click on to make the template extract everything. When I try an HDF_Read afterward, I only get a couple of the metadata items in my structure. Where's the rest of the data? Why isn't it there?

All I want to do is dump all of the data in the file into a structure! Is that too much to ask?! I really have no need or desire to learn all the ins and outs of HDF; I just want to read this data. Had this been plain text, I would already have my plots by now. Plain text files are so much better.

sigh

-Mike
