
Subject: Re: HDF_Browser Woes

Posted by [MarioIncandenza](#) on Thu, 03 May 2007 16:12:22 GMT

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

- > but I can make no sense of it whatsoever. Help (or suggestions
- > for using something OTHER than HDF_BROWER) is appreciated.

Liam Gumley's SDS_READ is certainly worth a try. Calling sequence for gathering information about HDF file contents is:

```
IDL> sds_read,filename,null,/info
```

Hope this helps,

Edward H.

Subject: Re: HDF_Browser Woes

Posted by [Benjamin Hornberger](#) on Thu, 03 May 2007 16:21:16 GMT

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

David Fanning wrote:

- > Folks,
- >
- > Does anyone have the foggiest idea of how HDF_BROWSER works?
- > I'm trying to figure out what is in an unknown HDF file.
- > When I select the READ button, something is returned,
- > but I can make no sense of it whatsoever. Help (or suggestions
- > for using something OTHER than HDF_BROWER) is appreciated.

I can tell you how (little) I used hdf_read(). I believe hdf_browser() can produce a template to subsequently open several files of the same type / structure with hdf_read() without going through what I describe below each time.

I open hdf_read() and pick a file. The text field on the upper left tells you what's in the file (attributes, datasets etc.), which you can select by doubleclicking. You can also use the dropdown list to show only a selection. If you select an attribute, dataset or whatever, you can preview it in the window on the upper right. The preview is kind of limited, however. For example, byte/char arrays representing strings are plotted (funny, isn't it?) in one netCDF file I am testing right now (yes, it also supports netCDF).

In the lower half of the window, once you have selected an attribute / dataset / whatever, you can choose to extract (read) it and give a name.

Once you click OK, the return value of hdf_read() is a structure with the fields containing the stuff you have extracted (read). For example,

if you do

```
data=hdf_read(file)
```

and then extract attribute 1 as 'a' and dataset 2 as 'b', in the end you'll have a structure 'data' with fields 'a' and 'b'.

Hope that helps,
Benjamin

Subject: Re: HDF_Browser Woes

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 03 May 2007 16:49:08 GMT

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

Benjamin Hornberger writes:

- > I can tell you how (little) I used hdf_read(). I believe hdf_browser()
- > can produce a template to subsequently open several files of the same
- > type / structure with hdf_read() without going through what I describe
- > below each time.

Ooohhhh! Humm, I didn't even know there was a connection between HDF_BROWSER and HDF_READ. I probably should have read the documentation instead of assuming this would work intuitively. :-)

Cheers,

David

P.S. Is it just me or is HDF_BROWSER just a bit misleading as a name? Perhaps I shouldn't have tried H5_BROWSER first. This gave me the entirely wrong idea of what HDF_BROWSER was all about. :-(

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.

Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>

Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

Subject: Re: HDF_Browser Woes

Posted by [Richard Edgar](#) on Thu, 03 May 2007 17:08:46 GMT

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

David Fanning wrote:

> Benjamin Hornberger writes:

>

>> I can tell you how (little) I used hdf_read(). I believe hdf_browser()
>> can produce a template to subsequently open several files of the same
>> type / structure with hdf_read() without going through what I describe
>> below each time.

>

> Ooohhhh! Humm, I didn't even know there was a connection
> between HDF_BROWSER and HDF_READ. I probably should have
> read the documentation instead of assuming this would
> work intuitively. :-)

Indeed, HDF_BROWSER is to HDF_READ as ASCII_TEMPLATE is to READ_ASCII. I
have a simple routine which uses the template produced:

```
PRO ReadHDF,filename,struct  
; Simple procedure to read an HDF file
```

```
RESTORE,FILENAME='template.dat'  
struct = HDF_READ(filename,TEMPLATE=template)
```

```
END
```

where 'template.dat' contained a template previously SAVED from HDF_BROWSER.

It's been a while since I used HDF_BROWSER, so I can't remember how to
use it exactly.... it's certainly not as intuitive as ASCII_TEMPLATE.
Knowing what's supposed to be in the file would be a good start :-) The
fields should at least be named within the HDF file.

Richard

Subject: Re: HDF_Browser Woes

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 03 May 2007 17:21:25 GMT

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

Richard Edgar writes:

> Knowing what's supposed to be in the file would be a good start :-)

Indeed, but if the folks coming to me knew that, they
wouldn't be coming to me, would they? :-)

Their problem (and, by extension, mine) is that they
don't know jack. We are both trying desperately to
find out. But the tools, uh, seem to be fighting us. :-)

Cheers,

David

P.S. I am making some progress on this problem. I downloaded HDFView this morning, and by looking at a combination of that and HDF_BROWSER and some of Liam's excellent programs, I am beginning to piece things together. But progress is glacial, I'm afraid... (Humm. Not as good a metaphor as it used to be, according to my recent reading.)

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.

Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>

Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

Subject: Re: HDF_Browser Woes

Posted by [Richard Edgar](#) on Thu, 03 May 2007 17:58:23 GMT

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

David Fanning wrote:

> Richard Edgar writes:

>

>> Knowing what's supposed to be in the file would be a good start :-)

>

> Indeed, but if the folks coming to me knew that, they
> wouldn't be coming to me, would they? :-)

>

> Their problem (and, by extension, mine) is that they
> don't know jack. We are both trying desperately to
> find out. But the tools, uh, seem to be fighting us. :-)

Sorry... my head is spinning..... they don't have a clue what's supposed to be in the file (in any way, shape or form), yet they know that they need to read it????

Richard
