
Subject: HDF_Browser Woes

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 03 May 2007 15:55:47 GMT

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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_BROWSER) is appreciated.

Cheers,

David

--

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 [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 03 May 2007 18:14:02 GMT

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Richard Edgar writes:

> 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????

Clearly you are not on the front lines teaching people
how to use IDL or your head wouldn't be spinning. (Unless,
of course, from the inevitable overdose of Prosaic.) But,
yes, pretty much. They know their professional life
depends upon it, but they haven't yet learned which poor
sucker had already done all the hard work and will be
willing to share it with them.

That's, uh, sort of my role in life. :-)

Cheers,

David

P.S. Like everyone else, I'm trying to take the shortcuts,
too. But, unlike everyone else, I have to eventually explain

it to someone, which requires that I actually understand what I am doing. :-(

--

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 18:54:29 GMT
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David Fanning wrote:

>> 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
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>
> Clearly you are not on the front lines teaching people
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> of course, from the inevitable overdose of Prosaic.) But,
> yes, pretty much. They know their professional life
> depends upon it, but they haven't yet learned which poor
> sucker had already done all the hard work and will be
> willing to share it with them.

Well, I would sort of expect them to have a vague idea of what the file was supposed to contain, even if they don't know how it contains it. For example, if the HDF file is the output of a hydro calculation, there are probably going to be three velocities in there somewhere. This would have me looking for data set names like "v1" or "vx" or "velx" etc. in the browser. This does rely on the person who created the file doing a little bit of legwork - a possibly poor assumption.

If all they know about the data is that it's in an HDF file, but have nary a clue as to what the data might be..... you'll have more luck extracting meaning from the output of /dev/rand....

(Sorry if this is distracting you from the task at hand ;-))

Richard

Subject: Re: HDF_Browser Woes
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 03 May 2007 19:01:12 GMT

Richard Edgar writes:

> (Sorry if this is distracting you from the task at hand ;-))

Well, to tell you the truth, I just found the Modis Level 1B Product User's Guide, so I am in the process of *looking* for distractions just now. :-(

Cheers,

David

P.S. I'm beginning to understand why people who work with satellite data don't work with dogs underfoot. :-(

--

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 [James Kuyper](#) on Thu, 03 May 2007 20:18:46 GMT

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David Fanning wrote:

> Richard Edgar writes:

>

>> (Sorry if this is distracting you from the task at hand ;-))

>

> Well, to tell you the truth, I just found the Modis Level 1B

> Product User's Guide, so I am in the process of *looking*

> for distractions just now. :-(

You have my sympathy :-). If you have any suggestions for improving the Guide, I'd appreciate hearing them.

Are the L1B product files the ones you're trying to examine with the HDF_BROWSER()? If so, I hope that the filespecs which you can find at <<http://www.mcst.ssai.biz/mcstweb/L1B/product.html>> will help.

You can also find L1B filespecs at <<https://modaps.nascom.nasa.gov:9500/software/>>, along with the actual source code and static input files for all MODIS Land, Atmosphere, and Inhouse PGEs. It's a password protected site; you have to register at <<https://>

modaps.nascom.nasa.gov:9500> before you can use it. However, registration is just a legal formality to make sure you've signed the NASA Software Usage Agreement.

Subject: Re: HDF_Browser Woes

Posted by [George N. White III](#) on Thu, 03 May 2007 21:10:08 GMT

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On Thu, 3 May 2007, David Fanning wrote:

- > Does anyone have the foggiest idea of how HDF_BROWSER works?
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- > 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 tried HDF_BROWSER -- it needs tweaks for each different style of hdf 4 file.

Sometimes converting hdf4 to hdf5 produces a much simpler file. There is an h4toh5 utility to do this. The free R stats package has an hdf5 reader that can be used to get a 2nd opinion on whether the hdf5 file makes any sense.

--

George N. White III <aa056@chebucto.ns.ca>

Subject: Re: HDF_Browser Woes

Posted by [George N. White III](#) on Thu, 03 May 2007 21:14:24 GMT

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On Thu, 3 May 2007, David Fanning wrote:

- >> 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
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- > of course, from the inevitable overdose of Prosaic.) But,
- > yes, pretty much. They know their professional life
- > depends upon it, but they haven't yet learned which poor
- > sucker had already done all the hard work and will be
- > willing to share it with them.

When they do catch up with her, chances are (given the lack of information and the time frame when hdf was popular) she will be suffering from some form of senile dementia, so good luck getting any useful information.

> That's, uh, sort of my role in life. :-)

Data rescue -- fast growing field.

--

George N. White III <aa056@chebucto.ns.ca>
