
Subject: IDL & reading headers of netCDF files

Posted by [chloesharrocks](#) on Tue, 08 Jan 2008 10:46:02 GMT

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I'm a 4th year Physics UG trying to get to grips with IDL ready for my research project involving atmospheric data next term. I'm trying to read the header contents of some netCDF files and am at a complete loss (it doesn't help that I have never worked with netCDF files before and don't know what I'm actually trying to look for!). I have done some very basic C-Programming before, but am a novice at programming and have no experience with UNIX.

I've been using Liam Gumley's book and have read the section on reading and writing netCDF files but can't get the information I want. I've managed to obtain a list of the variables my files contain, but my supervisors have asked me to use the `ncdump -h` command to read what the header is. So here are my problems:

1. I'm a Mac OS X user so have tried during the `ncdump -h` command in my terminal but it fails. I understand this is because I need some netCDF software on my computer. I tried to download this but got completely lost in the detailed instructions relating to Unix - it seemed to imply that I required a C-compiler on my computer for the installation to work (I don't have a C-compiler) and the files it told me to use did not exist in the folder I had just downloaded.
2. Is there any way of avoiding UNIX and being able to read the contents of the header directly in IDL's Development Environment?
3. I have downloaded Panoply (<http://www.giss.nasa.gov/tools/panoply/>) which seems to open the netCDF files very easily and provides me with information about the variables contained and also seems to be able to plot data onto maps very easily. Is this essentially doing what the `ncdump -h` command does?

If anyone could guide me through a step-by-step guide to downloading the netCDF software onto my Mac and also letting me know whether I can do the equivalent command directly in IDLDE I would be very grateful.

Thanks
Chloé

Subject: Re: IDL & reading headers of netCDF files

Posted by [JMB](#) on Wed, 09 Jan 2008 12:11:23 GMT

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> If anyone could guide me through a step-by-step guide to downloading

- > the netCDF software onto my Mac and also letting me know whether I can
- > do the equivalent command directly in IDLDE I would be very grateful.

Did you try to use the HDF icon in IDLDE?

Once you have selected your NetCDF file, try the preview button for each field.

Then you could write with IDL a netCDF reader specific to the datasets you really need.

Jérôme

Subject: Re: IDL & reading headers of netCDF files

Posted by [JMB](#) on Fri, 15 Feb 2008 13:19:09 GMT

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This is even better to read the netCDF header,

Here is the NetCDF reader written by David Fanning:

http://www.dfanning.com/programs/ncdf_browser.zip

Jérôme

Subject: Re: IDL & reading headers of netCDF files

Posted by [kishore1818](#) on Thu, 21 Feb 2008 16:27:32 GMT

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On Jan 8, 6:46 am, chloesharro...@gmail.com wrote:

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- > research project involving atmospheric data next term. I'm trying to
- > read the header contents of some netCDF files and am at a complete
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> the netCDF software onto my Mac and also letting me know whether I can
> do the equivalent command directly in IDLDE I would be very grateful.
>
> Thanks
> Chloé

Hi Chloe,

You are trying to read the NetCDF files. I am giving one program. You can try this one, and it will tell what the parameters are available in your Netcdf file. using that you can read the netCDF file. just give your filename at line number 698. Still, if have any problem reading the program tell me I will give one sample NetCDF file and how to read the program also. I am using different types of data formats.
best of luck.

The IDL program file.
<http://www.mathstat.dal.ca/~kishore/>

Thanks

Kishore
