

What is HDF4?

HDF stands for Hierarchical Data Format. It is a library and multi-object file format for the transfer of graphical and numerical data between machines.

It is freely available. The distribution consists of the HDF library, the HDF command line utilities, and a test suite (source code only).

Features of the HDF File Format:

- It is versatile. HDF supports several different data models. Each data model defines a specific aggregate data type and provides an API for reading, writing, and organizing data and metadata of the corresponding type. Data models supported include multidimensional arrays, raster images, and tables.
- It is self-describing, allowing an application to interpret the structure and contents of a file without any outside information.
- It is flexible. With HDF, you can mix and match related objects together in one file and then access them as a group or as individual objects. Users can also create their own grouping structures using an HDF feature called vgroups.
- It is extensible. It can easily accommodate new data models, regardless of whether they are added by the HDF development team or by HDF users.
- It is portable. HDF files can be shared across most common platforms, including many workstations and high performance computers. An HDF file created on one computer can be read on a different system without modification.