RFC: Bundling the HDF-EOS Plugin with HDFView

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# Introduction

The following memo is from Dan Marinelli about bundling the HDF-EOS plugin with HDFView:

“*The HDF-EOS plug-in was developed by Raytheon via the EEB contract with NASA. It is considered NASA developed software. By integrating the HDF-EOS plug-in with the HDFView software, HDFView can be used browse any HDF-EOS file in a way that reflects the HDF-EOS data model. This feature benefits many HDF-EOS users. HDFView is owned by The HDF Group and is provided free to the community of users. Users are responsible for building their tools, incorporating both products, and using them as needed.*

*Since there is a lag between HDF-EOS plug-in and HDFView releases, HDF-EOS users may attempt to integrate a version of the HDF-EOS plug-in that is not compatible with their version of HDFView. In such cases, HDFView cannot open HDF-EOS files. The HDF Group has received several complaints in the past regarding this issue.*

*This memo is to provide NASA concurrence with allowing Raytheon to bundle the version of the HDF-EOS plug-in compatible with HDFView and to redistribute the bundled package. The redistribution of the bundled package would be done as soon as a new version of HDF-EOS plug-in is released.”*

This RFC describes the options and work needed for the request Dan mentioned above.

# The current state

HDFView and the HDF-EOF plugin are developed and released independently. HDFView is developed and released at The HDF Group and the HDF-EOS plugin work is done by Raytheon. HDFView is usually released once a year (middle November). The plugin is released a few months after each release of HDFView so that the plugin can pick up the changes and updated from HDFView.

The decision of having separate release was made a few years ago based on the following reasons:

* The HDF-EOS plugin and HDFView are done by different teams and have different release cycles
* The HDF-EOS plugin and HDFView have different supported platforms. Usually HDFView supports more platforms than the plugin
* Majority of general users do not need the plugin
* Maintaining the fixes and keeping up the plugin with HDFView release is a lot of work

As Dan Marinelli mentioned in his memo, the lag of the HDF-EOS plugin causes problems for users. HDF-EOS users may attempt to integrate a version of the HDF-EOS plug-in that is not compatible with the users’ version of HDFView. In such cases, HDFView cannot open HDF-EOS files. The HDF Group has received several complaints in the past regarding this issue. Also, installing the HDF-EOS plugin can be frustrating. Users have to manually enter the correct HDFView path and other information. In the next section we propose a few solutions to this problem.

# Tentative solutions

We propose several options on bundling the HDF-EOS plugin into HDFView and list their pros and cons. The proposed solutions are based on the fact that the HDF Group will take binary files from the HDF-EOS release. The work of the development and release for the HDF-EOS plugin will be done by Raytheon.

## Add the plugin to the HDFView installer but users can choose to install the plugin or not

The HDFView installation program includes the HDF-EOS plugin

## Distribute a separate HDFView installer that installs the plugin automatically

## Use a "Add plugin" button in HDFView so that users can add their will

## Distribute a special version of HDFView with the plugin by Raytheon

The HDF Group will provide a link to his release of HDFView.

# References