# Title - Handling obsolete option(s) for tools

# Subject

How to handle previous option(s) along with ***‘--follow-symlinks’*** option among tools (h5diff, h5ls and h5copy)

# Background

We recently made decision to use ***‘—follow-symlinks’*** option among tools. And the option will need to be applied for the tools (h5ls for now and h5copy as needed).

So decision needs to be made about how to handle the previous options.

# Current options and availability

### h5ls

* Follow external links ***: ‘–E’*** or ***’ –external’***
* No follow soft link currently available and will be implemented along with the ‘—follow-links’ option.

### h5copy

* Follow soft links to copy the end object : ***‘-f soft’***
* Follow external links to copy the end object : *‘****-f ext’***

### h5diff

* Follow soft and external link(s) : ***‘—follow-symlinks’***

# Suggestion

* Use **‘–follow-symlinks’** to follow links (soft and external) for both ‘h5ls’ and ‘h5copy’ as already decided.
* Keep the previous options for the backward compatibility.
  + ***‘–E’*** for h5ls
  + ***‘–f soft’*** and ***‘–f ext’*** for h5copy
* Remove the previous options from document, so it doesn’t mislead to use the old options for the new user. However keep the feature for the previous user.

[Email feed backs]

Good document. I agree with the proposal.

Elena

Quoting Quincey Koziol <[koziol@hdfgroup.org](mailto:koziol@hdfgroup.org)>:

> Hi Jonathan,

>

> On Mar 1, 2010, at 4:55 PM, Jonathan Kim wrote:

>

>>

>> Adding "Deprecated Options" section sounds convincing to me either

>> keep it permanently or not.

>> As you mentioned, these options probably will stay there for a long

>> time until we are facing a reason to remove.

>>

>> About distinguishing between symbolic links, unless there are real

>> life demand in the past, I am voting for keep the symbolic links

>> transparent to user.

>> I assume we divided it according to the implementation from source

>> code or different time line of adding symbolic link features.

>

> Ditto. If we need to add some separation between the two (or more,

> eventually, possibly) types of links we can fall back on the

> previous method used for h5copy.

>

> Quincey

>

>

>> Thanks.

>> Jonathan

>>

>> -----Original Message-----

>> From: Frank Baker [mailto:fbaker@hdfgroup.org]

>> Sent: Monday, March 01, 2010 4:34 PM

>> To: Jonathan Kim

>> Cc: Quincey Koziol; Elena Pourmal; Peter Cao

>> Subject: Re: Handling obsolete option(s) for tools

>>

>>

>> Jonathan,

>>

>> My original inclination was also to remove deprecated links from the

>> docs, but I have been convinced otherwise. In the interest of

>> backward/forward compatibility and anticipating what information a

>> user is likely to need, we should find a way to both keep them in the

>> document and encourage people to

>> (1) not use them in new work and (2) where possible, clean them out

>> of old work.

>>

>> One example is how to help the user who is debugging an old script

>> that has begun failing in some manner (they're working files from a

>> new source, a new new feature has complicated an options action,

>> etc). That user is likely to need descriptions of the old options as

>> he/she goes through the script decoding its action.

>>

>> One approach would be to add a "Deprecated Options" section

>> immediately following the "Options" section. This section could be

>> introduced with an appropriate statement urging users to move away from them.

>>

>> Incidentally, it seems likely that some deprecated options will never

>> actually be removed from the tools as there may just be too many

>> scripts out there that would break. That is, the "Deprecated

>> Options" section could become permanent.

>>

>> On a different note, are we providing any way for a user to specify

>> following soft links but not external links? It's easy to imagine a

>> scenario where a user would want to follow soft links (i.e., within a

>> file) but would be unable to follow external links.

>>

>> -- Frank

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