How to Name an HDF Tool (or Product)

# Introduction

We have added several tools in the past a few years. The list of our tools is still growing. Naming a tool has become an issue since we currently do not have any written guidelines. The purpose of this discussion is to brainstorming ideas of choosing good names for our new tools.

Choosing a good name is particularly important for a number of reasons, such as:

* the name is the “business card”, which says about the product;
* the name is the first thing prospective users know and need to remember;
* The name will be used for many years. Getting it right at the first time is very important because changing the name may cause a lot of confusion to users.

# Current tools

## Tools distributed with HDF5 library release

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| gif2h5 | h52gif | h5copy | h5diff | h5dump |
| h5import | h5jam | h5ls | h5mkgrp | h5repack |
| h5repart | h5stat | h5unjam  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

## Tools distributed with HDF4 library release

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| gif2hdf | hdf24to8 | hdf2gif | hdf2jpeg | hdf8to24 |
| hdfcomp | hdfed | hdfimport | hdfls | hdfpack |
| hdftor8 |  hdfunpac | hdiff | hdp | hrepack |
| jpeg2hdf | ncdump | ncgen | paltohdf | r8tohdf |
| Ristosds  | vmake | vshow |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

## Tools with separate release

* HDFView
* h4toh5
* h5toh4

## Tools recently added for specific projects

* H5edit
* H5augjpss
* Nag
* ?

## Tools in development

* H5json (h5jump?)
* Psh5x
* ?

# Tips for choosing a good name

Below is a list of some aspects to consider when choosing a name:

* **Brainstorming**: we currently use our RFCs and technical discussions for this purpose.
* **Reflect the meaning to its function:** such as h5copy
* **Be consistent**: Consistent with the version of the library such as HDF5 tools starts with “h5”. Consistent cross libraries, such as the “repack” tools: h5repack for HDF5 and hrepack for HDF5.
* **Stay legal**: do not infringe copyright/trademark legal rights
* **Easy to pronounce, easy to remember**
* **Don't alienate customers**: It is very important to check if the name may be considered offensive for certain people

# Brainstorming

* Use all lower case letters
* Use h5 for HDF5 tools and h4 for HDF4 tools
* For conversion tools, use “to” instead of “2”, e.g. h5togif
* Don’t system specific names, e.g. h5alias. It can be only be understood by some users.
* 7 letters or less
* Don’t use special charecters, e.g. “\_”, “&”
* Have clear meaning of tools function. hcomp is confusing: compare or compression?
* Use one name for converters with different flags to define direction of the conversion
* Assign a committee for developing a name for a new tool