On Mon, 27 Oct 1997, Wayne Landsman wrote:
> I always thought that when opening a file with OPENU that the file wouldn't
> change size, unless one wrote past the end of the file. But below I give an
> example of a file changing size, even though I never reached the end of the
> file.
>
> I suspect this might be a IDL (or Solaris 2.6) bug, because if I uncomment
> the ;print,fstat(lun) line below, then the file size stays unchanged.
> Anybody know if the behaviour in the example below is expected?
<example cut>

The size change also happens on Digital Unix 4.0A with IDL 4.0.1 (and earlier
versions).
I wasn't surprised by this behaviour in IDL, having first been totally freaked
out by it in the C world.   (I found out about it the hard way.)   In C, you
have to do a fseek() or fflush() in between changing from a read to a write
(or vice versa) on the same streamed file unit, otherwise things just go wrong.
(At least C documentation on fopen() usually points this out.)

IDL's normal I/O routines are based on C routines, and I guess that this is
why they have the same problem.   (IDL's POINT_LUN is equivalent to a fseek().
Also, I guess that FSTAT() incorporates a seek.)
It would be nice if the IDL docs mentioned this somewhere.

So, anyway, when changing from a read to a write (or vice versa) on the
same file unit, you should always do something like:
 POINT_LUN, -lun, junk
or, as you've tried, an FSTAT(),
or possibly FLUSH,lun.

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