
Subject: Reading a tape with Unix IDL

Posted by [landsman](#) on Fri, 11 Oct 1991 20:58:00 GMT

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Has anyone succesfully used IDL to directly access a tape on a UNIX machine? I am coming from a VMS environment and have several procedures which use the IDL TAPRD function. This function is unavailable in UNIX IDL. In some cases, I have been able to get around this problem by first copying the file from tape to disk, e.g.

```
dd if=/dev/tape of=file.fits bs=2880
```

and then accessing the disk file with IDL.

However, I have other IDL procedures, (such as those that list FITS headers on tape), where one does not want to dump the entire tape to disk. I can imagine a couple of ways in which one might emulate the VMS TAPRD function.

(1) Write a C function that emulates TAPRD and is linked to IDL via CALL_EXTERNAL or the SPAWN command.

(2) I am always told that under Unix, that a tapedrive "is just another device". Perhaps this means that one can access the tape directly using the IDL READU command.

Anyway, has anyone successfully implemented one of the methods, or found some other way to access a tape with Unix IDL?

Thanks,

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