
Subject: Ultrix 4.4, IDL, and Exabyte 8200SX don't mix

Posted by [kluge](#) on Tue, 21 Feb 1995 21:17:09 GMT

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We're having a problem using our Exabyte 8200SX tape drive on a DECstation 5000/200 running Ultrix 4.4. The problem only crops up when we're using IDL (Interactive Data Language) 3.6.1a. I would appreciate any suggestions you have regarding the cause and solution.

We have data tapes that store images of the sun. We use IDL to read the images of the sun off the tapes and on to disk. Prior to our upgrade to Ultrix 4.4 this worked fine. Now, when we try to do tape reads through IDL, random bytes seem to be dropped from the directory and file entries. So, we'll lose a byte describing a file's length, or we'll lose a byte in the middle of a file's name. The result is that we can no longer read any of these data tapes.

I think these tapes are written on an SGI. Neither the process to create the tapes nor the software to read them (aside from the operating system) has changed since our upgrade.

The backup system, which uses the same tape drive, hasn't had any problems. We can still read tapes written prior to the upgrade.

We ran the diagnostic tool tapex in "extensive testing mode" on the drive. It reported an error with MTWEOF, but I was told that this operation wasn't valid on an Exabyte anyway. All other tests passed.

I have tried different SCSI cables on the machine with the tape drive. I've tried cutting the number of devices on the SCSI chain down to the bare minimum, to make the SCSI chain short. And I've tried moving the drive to another machine (still a DECstation 5000/200 running Ultrix 4.4 with IDL 3.6.1a). In all cases, the problem remained the same.

I called RSI (authors of IDL) and asked them if they knew about any problem with tape drives, IDL, and Ultrix 4.4. They said they didn't.

I've tried everything I can think of. I would appreciate any ideas you might have. Thanks.

-Kevin

Kevin Kluge

kluge@Flare.Stanford.EDU

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Kevin L. Kluge

kluge@flare.stanford.edu
