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Subject: Re: Trouble writing very large files  
Posted by [wlandsman](#) on Fri, 16 Jan 2009 21:21:15 GMT  
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On Jan 16, 9:38 am, Maarten <maarten.sn...@knmi.nl> wrote:

> I think the right answer was given by Wayne in his original post. What  
> I don't get is why you'd want a 4G unformatted data file in the first  
> place, I'd prefer to dump the data to an HDF-5 file.

Well, I encountered the problem when trying to write data in the FITS data format used in astronomy, and I isolated the problem to the `writeu` call used in the IDL FITS writer. You are right that the problem probably would not occur when writing to HDF-5, since the IDL HDF writer uses an external library, and not `writeu`.

As discussed in the earlier thread on this topic, the solution is to write a big array in pieces, e.g.

```
for i=0,255 do writeu,1,im[*,*],i
```

For the FITS writer, my kluge will be to write a wrapper procedure `writebigu.pro` to replace `writeu`, which will write an array in pieces if the number of elements exceeds  $2^{31}$ . --Wayne

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