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

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