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Multi-Terabyte EIDE Disk Arrays running Linux RAID5

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High-energy physics experiments are currently recording large amounts of data and in a few years will be recording prodigious quantities of data. New methods must be developed to handle this data and make analysis at universities possible. Grid Computing is one method; however, the data must be cached at the various Grid nodes. We examine some storage techniques that exploit recent developments in commodity hardware. Disk arrays using RAID level 5 (RAID5) include both parity and striping. The striping improves access speed. The parity protects data in the event of a single disk failure, but not in the case of multiple disk failures.
We report on tests of dual-processor Linux Software RAID5 arrays and Hardware RAID5 arrays using the 12-disk 3ware controller, in conjunction with 300 GB disks, for use in offline high-energy physics data analysis. The price of IDE disks is now less than $1/GB. These RAID5 disk arrays can be scaled to sizes affordable to small institutions and used when fast random access at low cost is important.

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