

Author Guidelines for MSS Symposium Proceedings

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Abstract

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Table 1. Sample table.

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Figure 1. Example of short caption.

Things that go bump in the night.

Figure 2. Example of long caption requiring more than one line.

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Please direct any questions to your session chair or to the publications chairs Ethan Miller (elm@cs.ucsc.edu) or Rod Van Meter (Rod.VanMeter@nokia.com).

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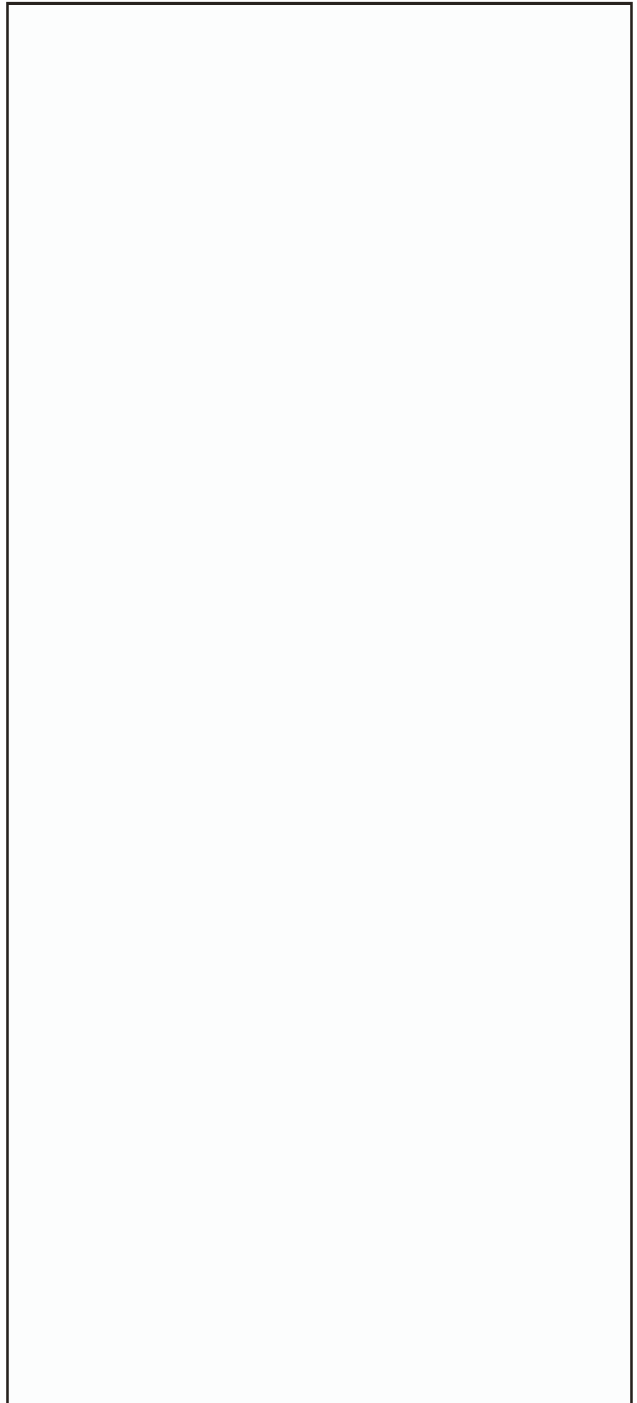
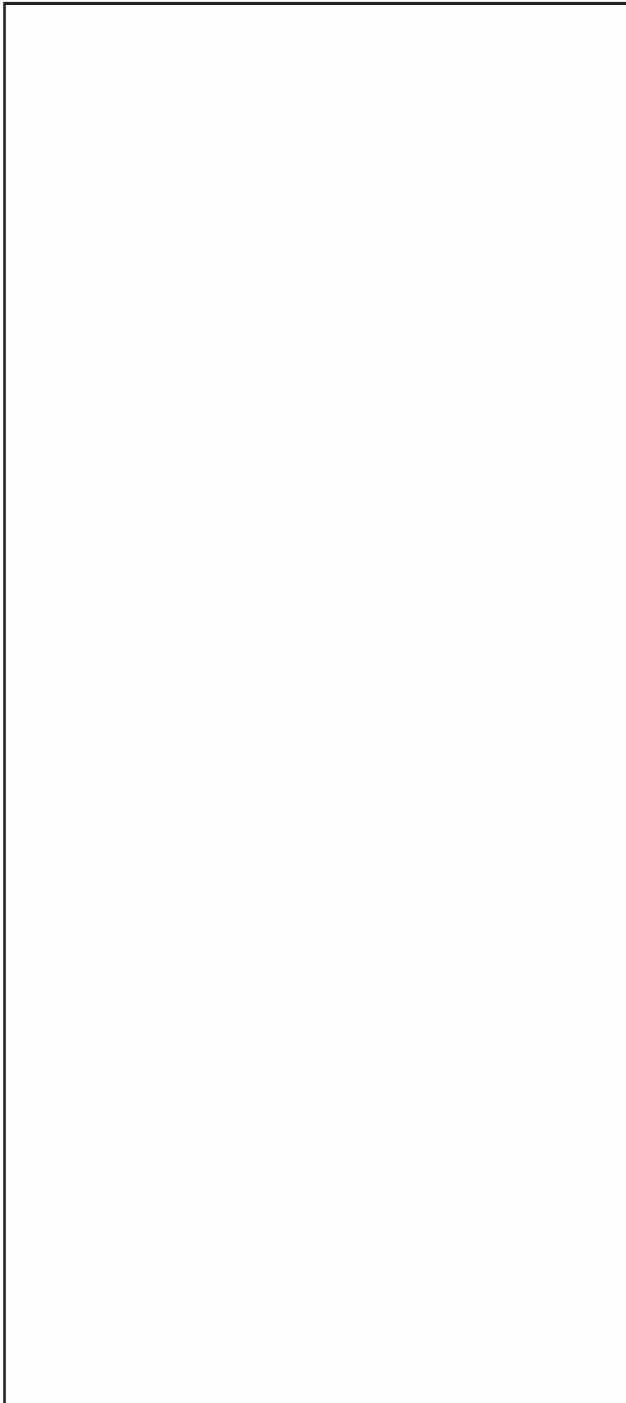
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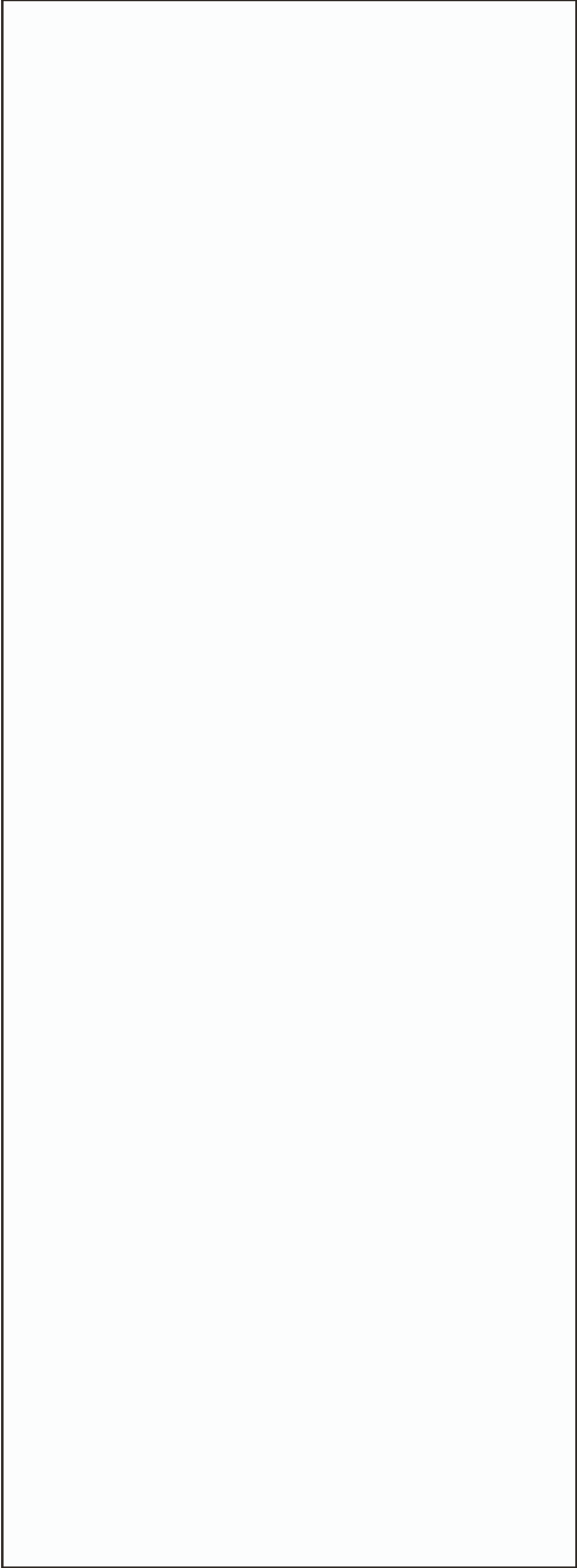
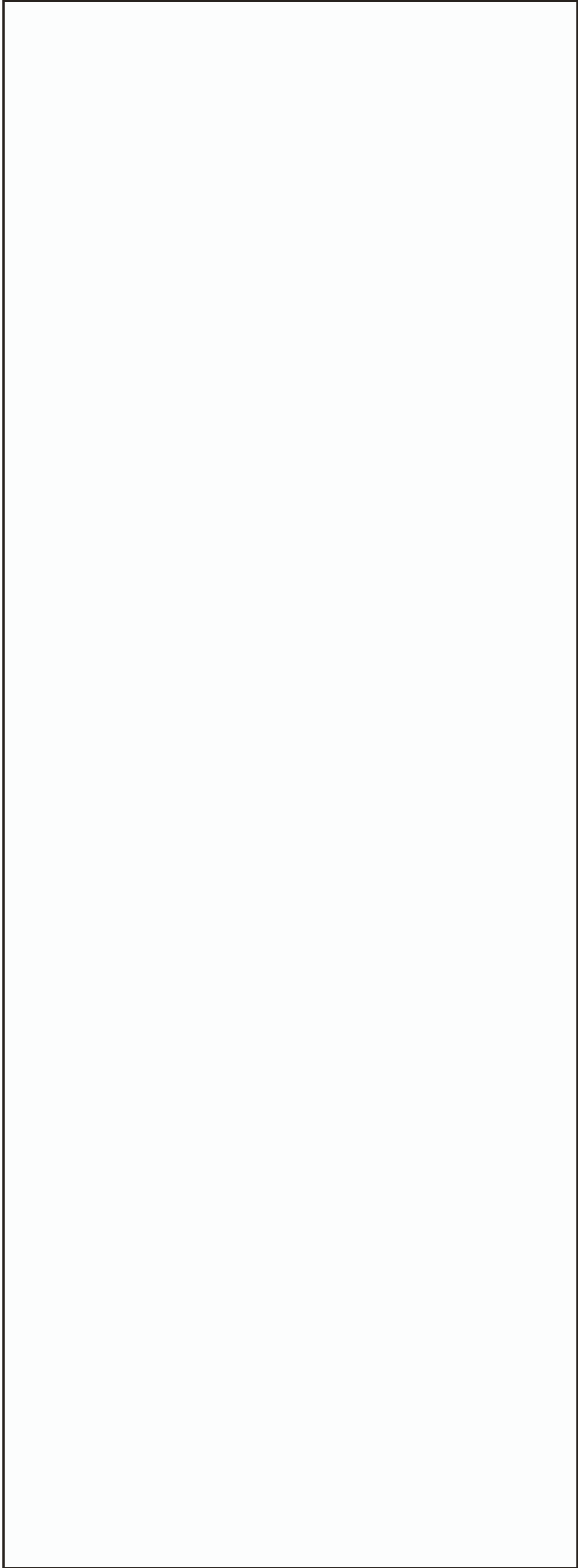
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Reliability Mechanisms for Very Large Storage Systems

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Abstract

Reliability and availability are increasingly important in large-scale storage systems built from thousands of individual storage devices. Large systems must survive the failure of individual components; in systems with thousands of disks, even infrequent failures are likely in some device. We focus on two types of errors: nonrecoverable read errors and drive failures. We discuss mechanisms for detecting and recovering from such errors, introducing improved techniques for detecting errors in disk reads and fast recovery from disk failure. We show that simple RAID cannot guarantee sufficient reliability; our analysis examines the tradeoffs among other schemes between system availability and storage efficiency. Based on our data, we believe that two-way mirroring should be sufficient for most large storage systems. For those that need very high reliability, we recommend either three-way mirroring or mirroring combined with RAID.

1. Introduction

System designers have been making computer systems with better performance, lower cost, and larger scale over the last 20 years, but high availability and reliability issues have been somewhat neglected in most designs. Siewiorek and Swarz [15] noted four reasons for an increasing con-

cern on fault tolerance and reliability: harsher environments, novice users, increasing repair costs, and larger systems. For storage systems, increasing the number of devices increases the likelihood that failure will occur in at least one device in the system, potentially causing loss of data.

We are primarily concerned with two types of failures: disk failures and nonrecoverable read errors. In petabyte-scale file systems, disk failures will be a daily (if not more frequent) occurrence—data losses with this frequency cannot be tolerated. Moreover, disk rebuild times are becoming longer as disk capacity outpaces bandwidth [7], increasing the “window of vulnerability” during which a second disk failure would cause data loss from a RAID.

Nonrecoverable read errors are also a problem of increasing importance. Disk drives such as the Seagate ST3146807LW quote nonrecoverable read error rates of 1 in 10^{15} bits. At 100 GB/second aggregate bandwidth (20 MB/s per disk), nonrecoverable read errors occur several times per hour across the whole system even when a disk has not completely failed.

It is unacceptable to lose data in large storage system simply because a few components have failed. Our work explores the causes of such failures and presents redundancy mechanisms to reduce data loss when drives do fail.

We investigate the availability issues in a very large-scale storage system built from object-based storage devices (OBSDs) [17]. An OBSB is a network-attached storage device [6] that presents an interface of arbitrarily-named objects of variable size. In our OBSB storage system, files are broken into objects, and the objects are then distributed across many devices. The total storage capac-

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ity of this OBSD system is expected to be 2 PB¹. In such a large-scale distributed storage system with thousands of nodes, there is a high likelihood that at least one node will be down at any given time.

Data for a single file will be distributed across hundreds of individual OBSDs. This distribution must be done in a decentralized fashion so that there is no central bottleneck when a single file is accessed by thousands of clients. Individual OBSDs can manage low-level storage allocation themselves, leaving the problems of allocating data to OBSDs and replication to the higher-level file system

If an OBSD consists of multiple drives, we can use RAID or other redundancy mechanisms within the OBSD to safeguard data. This approach is feasible and could increase the availability of a single OBSD. However, it is expensive because of the need for custom hardware and software to manage the redundancy and the need for a higher-speed network to connect the collection of drives. Additionally, RAID hardware and software are often complex and have greater chance of failures. If the non-disk hardware or software in an OBSD fails, the data is unavailable, though recovery time from such faults is often lower than that for rebuilding a failed disk. An alternate approach would be to put the OBSD software on each drive and attach it directly to the network. This approach might be less expensive in the long run, but would require more redundancy between OBSDs to provide a comparable level of reliability.

A guiding principle in our research is that disk failures should not significantly affect overall system behavior by losing data or significantly decreasing bandwidth if the file system is expected to be in a production system. If the system contains 4000 disks with 500 GB per disk, and each disk has a mean time to failure (MTTF) of 10^5 hours, a disk will fail every 25 hours on average. Simply using RAID is not enough because it takes too long to rebuild a disk. Assuming the RAID must still provide data to clients while rebuilding, it would take more than a day to rebuild a 500 GB disk at 5 MB/second. With 5 disks in a RAID, the chance of a second failure during a one day rebuild is about 0.1%, resulting in a mean time to data loss (MTTDL) from a 2 PB system of less than three years.

As disk prices keep dropping, so does the cost of providing redundant storage, allowing us to adopt more reliable replication mechanisms including RAID, mirroring, or both. Our research is concerned with providing guidance to find the right balance between cost and reliability.

2. Related work

There has been some research beyond RAID [4] in reliability and recovery for large-scale systems, though most of it has focused on the use of storage in wide-area systems. For example, Oceanstore [9, 18] is designed to have a very long MTTDL, but at the cost of dramatically increasing the number of disk requests per block written. Pangaea [13] allows individual servers to continue serving most of their data even when disconnected; however, this approach is designed for wide-area systems, and does not permit files to be striped across dozens of servers for higher bandwidth. Microsoft's Farsite project [1, 5] investigated the issue of replication for systems built from relatively unreliable commodity workstations. They focused on reliability, investigating replica placement strategies that take server reliability into account. However, Farsite is not designed for high-bandwidth applications, and must deal with servers that are less reliable than those in a single large-scale file system.

Other researchers have studied the question of how much replication is really necessary as well as techniques to reduce that level of replication. The Recovery Oriented Computing project [12] is trying to reduce the recovery time in order to get higher availability and lower total cost of ownership. Castro and Liskov [3] propose a secure replication system to tolerate Byzantine faults and make the window of vulnerability small. Litwin and Schwarz [10] present a family of linear hashing methods for distributing files. The algorithms reduce the number of messages and scale to the growth or shrink of files efficiently. Schwarz [14] has built a Markov model to estimate system availability; we will apply this model to the scalable file system we are designing.

3. Nonrecoverable errors

By storing vast quantities of data on commodity disks, we will reach the point where the built-in error detection (and correction) of the disks no longer prevents undetected errors. For example, error rates of one undetected error of 1 in 10^{15} bits are common. A single drive running at 25 MB/s would experience such an error about once a year. In a large system with 10,000 disks, however, such an error will occur once per hour *somewhere* in the system. While the rate is too small to worry about in a typical commercial database where human errors far outnumber machine-generated errors, there are applications where very large amount of data need to be stored without any data corruption, *e.g.* nuclear test simulation data files for the United States Department of Energy.

If we were to change the error control code that hard

¹A petabyte (PB) is 10^{15} bytes.

drives deploy to detect and (hopefully) correct slight data corruption so that internal errors are flagged instead of corrected, the hard drive would have far more nonrecoverable read errors, but the rate of an undetected read error would decrease substantially. Obviously, this is not possible for commodity hard drives and would even be complicated for specialized hard drives since the ECC and the magnetic code are increasingly interwoven [8]. We could embed the application data into an ECC, but the storage overhead is high.

3.1. Signature scheme

We have designed a scheme that detects and corrects small errors in blocks stored on disk in a large-scale system. Our scheme consists of two components: a signature scheme that *flags* corrupted data, and a RAID 5-like [4] mechanism that creates groups of blocks spread across different disks and stores the parity of the block on yet another disk. This redundancy allows us to reconstruct any corrupted block of data.

To flag corrupted data, we associate a *signature* with each data block. The signature is a bit string of fixed length f that is calculated from the contents of the block. A signature resembles a hash function, and should change if the block is only slightly changed. We calculate the signature when we store a data block and store the signature on the same disk separately from the data block. When we read the data block, we recompute the signature and compare it with the previously stored signature value. If the two signature values agree, we conclude that the block is correct; otherwise, we flag an error. This error is likely caused by an incorrect block, but could instead be caused by an incorrect signature.

To correct corrupt data, we introduce redundancy into the storage scheme. Blocks are assigned into redundancy sets, each of which contains n or fewer blocks. In addition, each set contains k parity blocks. The parity blocks are calculated using a standard erasure correction code. The parameter k is a constant of the file system. If k is one, then the single parity block is the normal (XOR) parity of the n blocks containing application data. If $k = 2$, a modern erasure correction code such as Even-Odd is used to calculate the two parity blocks. Beyond this, we can use generalized Reed-Solomon codes or other codes [2, 14]. We might want to use $k > 1$ because this also protects the data against disk failure.

3.2. Block signatures

A good signature scheme has the following properties:

1. The probability that two random blocks have the same signature is constant 2^{-f} .
2. The signature changes for small changes in the contents of the block.
3. The signature can be calculated using a simple scan of the block.
4. The signatures of a compound object can be calculated from the signature of constituent objects, *e.g.* a *file signature* can be calculated from the file block signatures. The file signature changes if two blocks are interchanged.
5. The signature scheme can use arbitrary f within a wide range.

We can construct such a signature using Galois fields [11], as follows. We break a block of length g bits into s bit symbols just as a written word in a western language is broken into characters. s is a constant of the scheme, with $s = 8$ or $s = 16$ being good choices. Each symbol is interpreted as an element of the Galois field with 2^s elements. A definition of Galois fields is beyond the scope of this paper; however, much of the complex math can be precalculated and stored in lookup tables, allowing signatures to be computed quickly.

We pick an element α of the Galois field such that the powers of α make up all the non-zero elements of the field; such an element is called primitive. Formally, we define the α signature of a block $B = (b_0, b_1, \dots, b_{l-1})$ as

$$\text{sig}_\alpha(b_0, b_1, \dots, b_{l-1}) = \sum_{i=0}^{l-1} \alpha^i b_i$$

This signature condenses a block of ls bits into s bits, but this signature is not long enough for our purposes. We therefore use a compound signature made up of several components:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{sig}_{\alpha_0, \alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_{t-1}}(b_0, b_1, \dots, b_{l-1}) = & \\ & (\text{sig}_{\alpha_0}(b_0, b_1, \dots, b_{l-1}), \\ & \text{sig}_{\alpha_1}(b_0, b_1, \dots, b_{l-1}), \dots, \\ & \text{sig}_{\alpha_{t-1}}(b_0, b_1, \dots, b_{l-1})) \end{aligned}$$

This signature yields ts bits, with $t = 4$ and $s = 8$ being typical values that yield a 32 bit signature. We use a single table lookup into a table with 2^{s+1} entries together with a single zero comparison and an integer addition to avoid the use of a logarithm and antilogarithm table.

The compound signature has several attractive properties, but is not cryptographically secure—indeed, it has these properties precisely because it is not secure. We can

define a file signature in a completely analogous way. If the file is stored in several blocks with possible zero-padding, then the file signature can be quickly calculated from the block signature. The signature is guaranteed to change if up to t symbols are changed. We can calculate the signature of a block after the swap of two sub-strings from the sub-string signature. Finally, we can calculate the signature of a parity block (generated by XOR parity or general Reed-Solomon coding) from the data blocks. Obviously, the signature can be calculated in a single sweep of the block while using little memory. All of these properties make this signature attractive for use in a large-scale system where data may be distributed across multiple OBSDs.

4. Disk failures

Protecting against nonrecoverable disk errors guarantees that individual disk blocks read from “working” are correct, but does not handle the case that an entire disk has failed. As discussed in Section 1, a 2 PB storage system will experience about one disk failure per day. Given the long rebuild times that current techniques require, disk failures would hurt performance and result in unacceptably high risk of data loss from a second disk failure. We investigated several redundancy mechanisms and developed mechanisms for fast recovery in a large-scale storage system, resulting in lower risk of data loss at an acceptable storage overhead.

4.1. Redundancy mechanisms

We assume that our storage system holds 2 PB of data, and is built from 500 GB disk drives. Such drives are not yet available, but will be by 2004–2005, assuming that current growth rates in disk capacity [7] continue. Note that a storage system containing 2 PB of data will require more capacity for redundancy. The ratio between data capacity and total storage capacity is the *storage efficiency*. We further assume that our disks have a mean time to failure (MTTF) of 10^5 hours. This is significantly shorter than that specified by drive manufacturers, but is longer than the 50,000 hours reported by sites such as the Internet Archive [16]. For simplicity, we assume the failure rates of the disks in the system are identical and independent, though this may not be true if many disks are from the same manufacturing batch.

We use the term *redundancy set* to refer to a block group composed of data blocks and their associated replicas or parity blocks. A single redundancy set will typically contain 1 MB to 1 TB. We consider three methods to configure the organization of a redundancy set: two-way mirroring (Mirror-2), three-way mirroring (Mirror-3), and RAID-5

Table 1. Cost and overhead of different reliability mechanisms.

Method	Cost (\$million)		Storage Efficiency
	2002	2005	
Mirror-2	\$2	\$0.2	50%
Mirror-3	\$4	\$0.4	33%
RAID 5+1	\$3	\$0.3	40%

with mirroring (RAID 5+1). In n -way mirroring, each data block in the redundancy set is stored n times, with each replica stored on a different OBSD. Under RAID 5+1, each OBSD consists of multiple disks organized as a RAID 5, and each data block is mirrored on two OBSDs. Table 1 summarizes the cost and storage efficiency of the three redundancy schemes using a current disk price of \$1/GB and an estimated disk price of \$0.1/GB in 2005.

4.2. Fast recovery mechanisms

When we use any of the redundancy mechanisms described above, there is still a small chance that the system will lose data. For example, Mirror-3 will fail when two of the three OBSDs in the redundancy set fail and the third fails while the other two are being rebuilt. We can use one of two mechanisms to deal with this situation: Fast Mirroring Copy (FMC) and Lazy Parity Backup (LPB).

Fast Mirroring Copy quickly provides additional redundancy for a redundancy set that has lost one copy. Rather than attempting to immediately rebuild an entire disk, FMC recreates the lost replicas throughout the storage system. Since the “peer” for each replica that was on the lost disk is on a different OBSD, this process takes time proportional to the size of a single redundancy set. For example, it would take only 100 seconds to create a new replica for a single 500 MB redundancy set. In a system in which a 500 GB disk contains replicas for 1000 redundancy sets, this technique could rebuild a missing disk within 2 minutes. The rebuilt disk is distributed across the entire storage system, but all of the data is protected as if the original disk had not failed.

Lazy Parity Backup has the same goal—protecting data by replication—but works by creating parity blocks in the background when the associated data blocks have not been modified for some time. This method can be used to create RAID-like structures across OBSDs. If FMC is used for rapidly-changing data, LPB can be used for more static data to gain the same reliability with lower storage overhead. This technique is somewhat similar to AutoRAID [19], but operates on a far larger storage system.

Table 2. Parameters for a 2 PB storage system.

Parameter	Value
Z (total data in the system)	2 PB
γ (recovery rate)	10^2 GB/hr
N (number of redundancy sets)	Z/S
$MTTF_{disk}$	10^5 hours
D (disks in an OBSD RAID 5)	5
S (data in one redundancy set)	varies

4.3. System availability

Using Markov models, we compared the mean time to data loss in a 2 PB of Mirror-2, Mirror-3, and RAID 5+1. The parameters of the storage system we used in our comparison is listed in Table 2.

To compare the MTTDL of the three redundancy schemes, we used the following equations which approximate (to within 1%) the MTTDL for each of the redundancy mechanisms²:

$$MTTDL_{Mirror-2} = \frac{MTTF_{disk}^2 \cdot \gamma}{2 \cdot Z} \quad (1)$$

$$MTTDL_{Mirror-3} = \frac{MTTF_{disk}^3 \cdot \gamma^2}{3 \cdot S \cdot Z} \quad (2)$$

$$MTTDL_{RAID\ 5+1} = \frac{(D-1)^2 \cdot MTTF_{disk}^4 \cdot \gamma^3}{2 \cdot D \cdot S^2 \cdot Z} \quad (3)$$

Using Equations 1, 2, and 3 and Table 2, we calculated the MTTDL for each redundancy mechanism using different sizes for a single redundancy set, as shown in Figure 1. For each mechanism, we show MTTDL for both $MTTDL_{disk} = 10^5$ hours and the manufacturers' claims of $MTTDL_{disk} = 10^6$ hours.

Our first result is that MTTDL for the system does not vary with the size of a redundancy set for Mirror-2, as expected from Equation 1. Though larger redundancy sets require more time for recovery, there are fewer of them. These two effects are balanced for Mirror-2, so the size of a single redundancy set does not affect overall MTTDL. For Mirror-3 and RAID 5+1 mechanisms, however, MTTDL decreases as the size of a single redundancy set increases. In both cases, the decrease in reliability due to longer recovery time overwhelms the increased reliability from having fewer, larger redundancy sets.

²Due to space limitations, we omit the derivations, which will be included in the full paper.

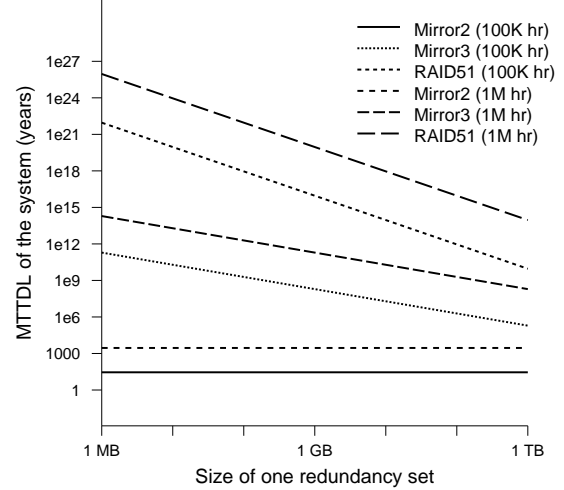


Figure 1. Mean time to data loss in a 2 PB storage system

Figure 1 seems to indicate that smaller redundancy sets provide longer MTTDL. However, this approach has several limitations. First, overall file system bandwidth will decrease if redundancy sets are too small because individual disk transfers will be too small. This sets a lower limit of 256 KB–4 MB for redundancy sets. Second, we assume that redundancy sets fail independently. If there are too many redundancy sets, however, many will share multiple disks, causing correlated failures. Third, the bookkeeping necessary for millions of small redundancy sets will be overwhelming. For all these reasons, we believe it unlikely that redundancy sets will be much smaller than 200 MB–1 GB.

Disk lifetime is another important factor in calculating MTTDL for the entire storage system. An order of magnitude in $MTTDL_{disk}$ from 10^5 hours to 10^6 hours can improve overall MTTDL by a factor of 100 for Mirror-2, 1000 for Mirror-3, and 10,000 for RAID 5+1. The use of a controlled environment to ensure longer disk lifetimes will result in a major benefit in overall system reliability.

Increasing the recovery rate γ can also improve overall system reliability. Placing a higher priority on disk transfer rate and recovering faster will greatly improve reliability by reducing the “window of vulnerability” during which the system may lose data. Doubling the recovery rate will double the reliability of Mirror-2, but will increase the reliability of RAID 5+1 by a factor of 8.

For a system with 2 PB of storage, we believe that Mirror-2 will provide sufficient redundancy at an acceptable cost. MTTDL for such a system will be about 30 years regardless of the redundancy set size, allowing us to use larger redundancy sets to reduce bookkeeping over-

head. Mirror-3 and RAID 5+1 can provide much longer MTDL—up to 2×10^{11} years for Mirror-3, and 10^{22} years for RAID 5+1. Although other schemes provide much greater MTDL, Mirror-2 is considerably simpler to implement than Mirror-3 and RAID 5+1, and provides good reliability at relatively low cost.

5. Conclusions

We have discussed two major sources of data loss in large-scale storage systems—nonrecoverable read errors and disk failures—and have presented mechanisms for dealing with each. By using signatures on individual disk blocks and redundancy across multiple storage devices, we can reduce the risk of data loss. Techniques such as fast mirror copy further decrease the chance of data loss to the point where simple two-way mirroring in a 2 PB file system can still have a mean time to data loss of 30 years without the use of expensive RAID hardware. If this is not sufficiently long, techniques such as three-way mirroring and RAID 5 with mirroring can virtually guarantee that data will never be lost.

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Telekinesis in Petabyte-Scale Storage Systems*

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Abstract

This is our abstract. In it we simply state that we've figured out how to use telekinesis in mass storage systems.

We'd say more here if there were more to say.

1. Introduction

Here we introduce the topic of telekinesis and explain its relevance to mass storage.

2. Our work

Here we explain what's nifty, keen, cool, rad and bad about our work. We're the first people in this part of the galaxy to use telekinesis as a key architectural component of mass storage systems.

2.1. Telekinetic bits

We figured out how to move bits using telekinesis. Fortunately, they are not heavy, so it was not hard.

2.2. Telekinetic readers and writers

The TKbits don't do any good if you can't read them and write them, so we figured out how, as shown in Figure 1.

2.2.1. Telekinetic readers. It's not that hard to read TKbits as long as you have the power.

2.2.2. Telekinetic writers. You can also write bits telekinetically if you know how.

3. Related work

Here's where we explain why it's niftier, keener, cooler, radder and badder than anything else in the known universe, including Fredkin gates, reversible computing and jellied beet consommé [1,2,3].

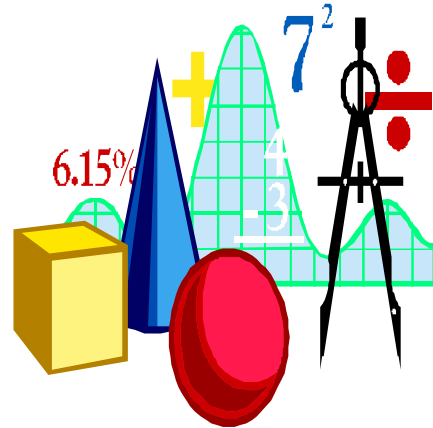


Figure 1. How to figure it out.

4. Future work

Here's where we explain how much of the work we really didn't get done before the paper was due.

5. Conclusions

Recap and indicate how totally cool it really all is. Be sure to state the conclusion: Necessity is the Mother of Invention [4].

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