



# Chapter 12: Physical Storage Systems

**Database System Concepts, 7<sup>th</sup> Ed.**

©Silberschatz, Korth and Sudarshan  
See [www.db-book.com](http://www.db-book.com) for conditions on re-use

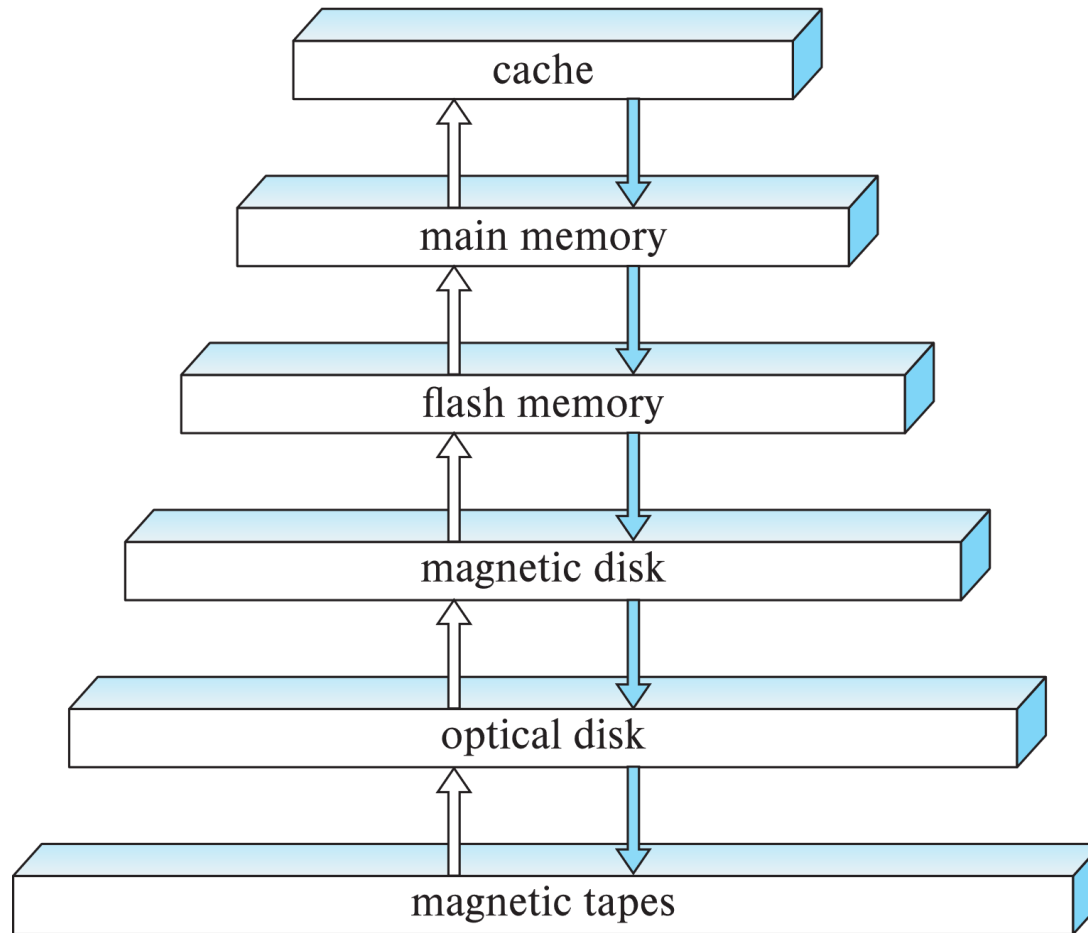


# Classification of Physical Storage Media

- Can differentiate storage into:
  - **volatile storage:** loses contents when power is switched off
  - **non-volatile storage:**
    - Contents persist even when power is switched off.
    - Includes secondary and tertiary storage, as well as batter-backed up main-memory.
- Factors affecting choice of storage media include
  - Speed with which data can be accessed
  - Cost per unit of data
  - Reliability



# Storage Hierarchy





# Storage Hierarchy (Cont.)

- **primary storage:** Fastest media but volatile (cache, main memory).
- **secondary storage:** next level in hierarchy, non-volatile, moderately fast access time
  - Also called **on-line storage**
  - E.g., flash memory, magnetic disks
- **tertiary storage:** lowest level in hierarchy, non-volatile, slow access time
  - also called **off-line storage** and used for **archival storage**
  - e.g., magnetic tape, optical storage
  - Magnetic tape
    - Sequential access, 1 to 12 TB capacity
    - A few drives with many tapes
    - Juke boxes with petabytes (1000's of TB) of storage

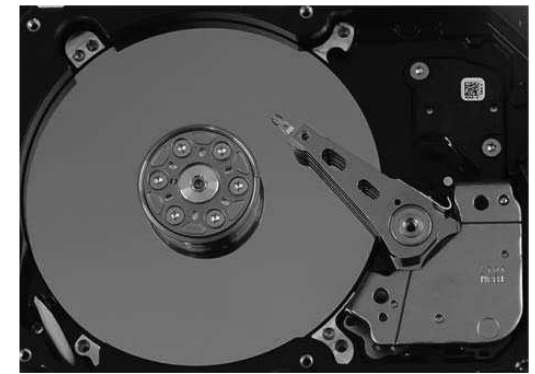
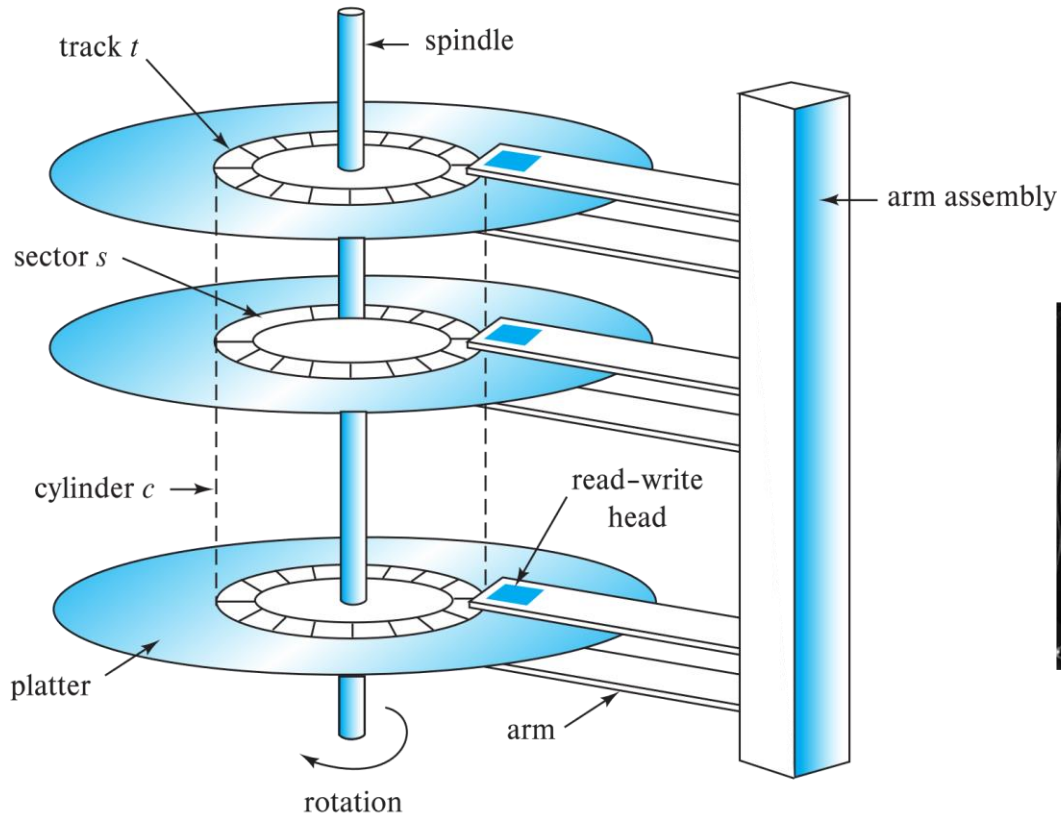


# Storage Interfaces

- Disk interface standards families
  - SATA (Serial ATA)
    - SATA 3 supports data transfer speeds of up to 6 gigabits/sec
  - SAS (Serial Attached SCSI)
    - SAS Version 3 supports 12 gigabits/sec
  - NVMe (Non-Volatile Memory Express) interface
    - Works with PCIe connectors to support lower latency and higher transfer rates
    - Supports data transfer rates of up to 24 gigabits/sec
- Disks usually connected directly to computer system
- In **Storage Area Networks (SAN)**, a large number of disks are connected by a high-speed network to a number of servers
- In **Network Attached Storage (NAS)** networked storage provides a file system interface using networked file system protocol, instead of providing a disk system interface



# Magnetic Hard Disk Mechanism



**Schematic diagram of magnetic disk drive**

**Photo of magnetic disk drive**



# Magnetic Disks

- **Read-write head**
- Surface of platter divided into circular **tracks**
  - Over 50K-100K tracks per platter on typical hard disks
- Each track is divided into **sectors**.
  - A sector is the smallest unit of data that can be read or written.
  - Sector size typically 512 bytes
  - Typical sectors per track: 500 to 1000 (on inner tracks) to 1000 to 2000 (on outer tracks)
- To read/write a sector
  - disk arm swings to position head on right track
  - platter spins continually; data is read/written as sector passes under head
- Head-disk assemblies
  - multiple disk platters on a single spindle (1 to 5 usually)
  - one head per platter, mounted on a common arm.
- **Cylinder**  $i$  consists of  $i^{\text{th}}$  track of all the platters



# Magnetic Disks (Cont.)

- **Disk controller** – interfaces between the computer system and the disk drive hardware.
  - accepts high-level commands to read or write a sector
  - initiates actions such as moving the disk arm to the right track and actually reading or writing the data
  - Computes and attaches **checksums** to each sector to verify that data is read back correctly
    - If data is corrupted, with very high probability stored checksum won't match recomputed checksum
  - Ensures successful writing by reading back sector after writing it
  - Performs **remapping of bad sectors**





# Performance Measures of Disks

- **Access time** – the time it takes from when a read or write request is issued to when data transfer begins. Consists of:
  - **Seek time** – time it takes to reposition the arm over the correct track.
    - Average seek time is 1/2 the worst case seek time.
      - Would be 1/3 if all tracks had the same number of sectors, and we ignore the time to start and stop arm movement
    - 4 to 10 milliseconds on typical disks
  - **Rotational latency** – time it takes for the sector to be accessed to appear under the head.
    - 4 to 11 milliseconds on typical disks (5400 to 15000 r.p.m.)
    - Average latency is 1/2 of the above latency.
  - Overall latency is 5 to 20 msec depending on disk model
- **Data-transfer rate** – the rate at which data can be retrieved from or stored to the disk.
  - 25 to 200 MB per second max rate, lower for inner tracks



# Performance Measures (Cont.)

- **Disk block** is a logical unit for storage allocation and retrieval
  - 4 to 16 kilobytes typically
    - Smaller blocks: more transfers from disk
    - Larger blocks: more space wasted due to partially filled blocks
- **Sequential access pattern**
  - Successive requests are for successive disk blocks
  - Disk seek required only for first block
- **Random access pattern**
  - Successive requests are for blocks that can be anywhere on disk
  - Each access requires a seek
  - Transfer rates are low since a lot of time is wasted in seeks
- **I/O operations per second (IOPS)**
  - Number of random block reads that a disk can support per second
  - 50 to 200 IOPS on current generation magnetic disks



# Performance Measures (Cont.)

- **Mean time to failure (MTTF)** – the average time the disk is expected to run continuously without any failure.
  - Typically 3 to 5 years
  - Probability of failure of new disks is quite low, corresponding to a “theoretical MTTF” of 500,000 to 1,200,000 hours for a new disk
    - E.g., an MTTF of 1,200,000 hours for a new disk means that given 1000 relatively new disks, on an average one will fail every 1200 hours
  - MTTF decreases as disk ages



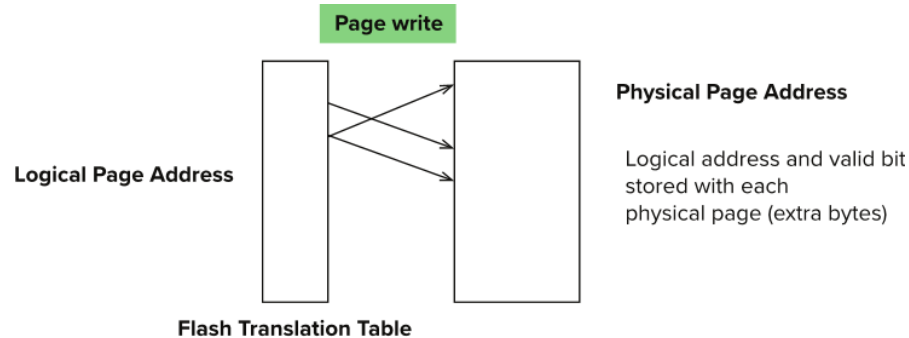
# Flash Storage

- NOR flash vs NAND flash
- NAND flash
  - used widely for storage, cheaper than NOR flash
  - requires page-at-a-time read (page: 512 bytes to 4 KB)
    - 20 to 100 microseconds for a page read
    - Not much difference between sequential and random read
  - Page can only be written once
    - Must be erased to allow rewrite
- **Solid state disks**
  - Use standard block-oriented disk interfaces, but store data on multiple flash storage devices internally
  - Transfer rate of up to 500 MB/sec using SATA, and up to 3 GB/sec using NVMe PCIe



# Flash Storage (Cont.)

- Erase happens in units of **erase block**
  - Takes 2 to 5 millisecs
  - Erase block typically 256 KB to 1 MB (128 to 256 pages)
- **Remapping** of logical page addresses to physical page addresses avoids waiting for erase
- **Flash translation table** tracks mapping
  - also stored in a label field of flash page
  - remapping carried out by **flash translation layer**



- After 100,000 to 1,000,000 erases, erase block becomes unreliable and cannot be used
  - **wear leveling**



# SSD Performance Metrics

- Random reads/writes per second
  - Typical 4 KB reads: 10,000 reads per second (10,000 IOPS)
  - Typical 4KB writes: 40,000 IOPS
  - SSDs support parallel reads
    - Typical 4KB reads:
      - 100,000 IOPS with 32 requests in parallel (QD-32) on SATA
      - 350,000 IOPS with QD-32 on NVMe PCIe
    - Typical 4KB writes:
      - 100,000 IOPS with QD-32, even higher on some models
- Data transfer rate for sequential reads/writes
  - 400 MB/sec for SATA3, 2 to 3 GB/sec using NVMe PCIe
- **Hybrid disks:** combine small amount of flash cache with larger magnetic disk



# RAID

- **RAID: Redundant Arrays of Independent Disks**
  - disk organization techniques that manage a large numbers of disks, providing a view of a single disk of
    - **high capacity** and **high speed** by using multiple disks in parallel,
    - **high reliability** by storing data redundantly, so that data can be recovered even if a disk fails
- The chance that some disk out of a set of  $N$  disks will fail is much higher than the chance that a specific single disk will fail.
  - E.g., a system with 100 disks, each with MTTF of 100,000 hours (approx. 11 years), will have a system MTTF of 1000 hours (approx. 41 days)
  - Techniques for using redundancy to avoid data loss are critical with large numbers of disks



# Improvement of Reliability via Redundancy

- **Redundancy** – store extra information that can be used to rebuild information lost in a disk failure
- E.g., **Mirroring** (or **shadowing**)
  - Duplicate every disk. Logical disk consists of two physical disks.
  - Every write is carried out on both disks
    - Reads can take place from either disk
  - If one disk in a pair fails, data still available in the other
    - Data loss would occur only if a disk fails, and its mirror disk also fails before the system is repaired
      - Probability of combined event is very small
        - Except for dependent failure modes such as fire or building collapse or electrical power surges
- **Mean time to data loss** depends on mean time to failure, and **mean time to repair**
  - E.g., MTTF of 100,000 hours, mean time to repair of 10 hours gives mean time to data loss of  $500 \cdot 10^6$  hours (or 57,000 years) for a mirrored pair of disks (ignoring dependent failure modes)





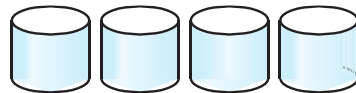
# Improvement in Performance via Parallelism

- Two main goals of parallelism in a disk system:
  1. Load balance multiple small accesses to increase throughput
  2. Parallelize large accesses to reduce response time.
- Improve transfer rate by striping data across multiple disks.
- **Bit-level striping** – split the bits of each byte across multiple disks
  - In an array of eight disks, write bit  $i$  of each byte to disk  $i$ .
  - Each access can read data at eight times the rate of a single disk.
  - But seek/access time worse than for a single disk
    - Bit level striping is not used much any more
- **Block-level striping** – with  $n$  disks, block  $i$  of a file goes to disk  $(i \bmod n) + 1$ 
  - Requests for different blocks can run in parallel if the blocks reside on different disks
  - A request for a long sequence of blocks can utilize all disks in parallel



# RAID Levels

- Schemes to provide redundancy at lower cost by using disk striping combined with parity bits
  - Different RAID organizations, or RAID levels, have differing cost, performance and reliability characteristics
- **RAID Level 0:** Block striping; non-redundant.
  - Used in high-performance applications where data loss is not critical.
- **RAID Level 1:** Mirrored disks with block striping
  - Offers best write performance.
  - Popular for applications such as storing log files in a database system.



(a) RAID 0: nonredundant striping



(b) RAID 1: mirrored disks



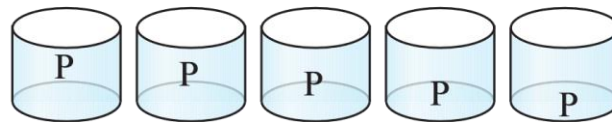
# RAID Levels (Cont.)

- **Parity blocks:** Parity block  $j$  stores XOR of bits from block  $j$  of each disk
  - When writing data to a block  $j$ , parity block  $j$  must also be computed and written to disk
    - Can be done by using old parity block, old value of current block and new value of current block (2 block reads + 2 block writes)
    - Or by recomputing the parity value using the new values of blocks corresponding to the parity block
      - More efficient for writing large amounts of data sequentially
  - To recover data for a block, compute XOR of bits from all other blocks in the set including the parity block



# RAID Levels (Cont.)

- **RAID Level 5:** Block-Interleaved Distributed Parity; partitions data and parity among all  $N + 1$  disks, rather than storing data in  $N$  disks and parity in 1 disk.
  - E.g., with 5 disks, parity block for  $n$ th set of blocks ( $4n, 4n+1, 4n+2, 4n+3$ ) is stored on disk  $(n \bmod 5)$ , with the data blocks stored on the other 4 disks.



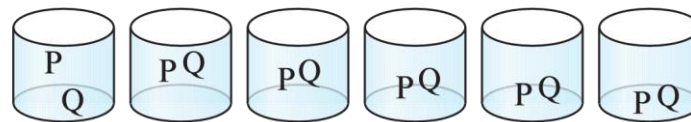
(c) RAID 5: block-interleaved distributed parity

P0	0	1	2	3
4	P1	5	6	7
8	9	P2	10	11
12	13	14	P3	15
16	17	18	19	P4



# RAID Levels (Cont.)

- **RAID Level 5 (Cont.)**
  - Block writes occur in parallel if the blocks and their parity blocks are on different disks.
- **RAID Level 6: P+Q Redundancy** scheme; similar to Level 5, but stores two error correction blocks (P, Q) instead of single parity block to guard against multiple disk failures.
  - Better reliability than Level 5 at a higher cost
    - Becoming more important as storage sizes increase



(d) RAID 6: P + Q redundancy



# RAID Levels (Cont.)

- **Other levels (not used in practice):**
  - **RAID Level 2:** Memory-Style Error-Correcting-Codes (ECC) with bit striping.
  - **RAID Level 3:** Bit-Interleaved Parity
  - **RAID Level 4:** Block-Interleaved Parity; uses block-level striping, and keeps a parity block on a separate **parity disk** for corresponding blocks from  $N$  other disks.
    - RAID 5 is better than RAID 4, since with RAID 4 with random writes, parity disk gets much higher write load than other disks and becomes a bottleneck



# Choice of RAID Level

- Factors in choosing RAID level
  - Monetary cost
  - Performance: Number of I/O operations per second, and bandwidth during normal operation
  - Performance during failure
  - Performance during rebuild of failed disk
    - Including time taken to rebuild failed disk
- RAID 0 is used only when data safety is not important
  - E.g., data can be recovered quickly from other sources



# Choice of RAID Level (Cont.)

- Level 1 provides much better write performance than level 5
  - Level 5 requires at least 2 block reads and 2 block writes to write a single block, whereas Level 1 only requires 2 block writes
- Level 1 had higher storage cost than level 5
- Level 5 is preferred for applications where writes are sequential and large (many blocks), and need large amounts of data storage
- RAID 1 is preferred for applications with many random/small updates
- Level 6 gives better data protection than RAID 5 since it can tolerate two disk (or disk block) failures
  - Increasing in importance since latent block failures on one disk, coupled with a failure of another disk can result in data loss with RAID 1 and RAID 5.





# Hardware Issues

- **Software RAID:** RAID implementations done entirely in software, with no special hardware support
- **Hardware RAID:** RAID implementations with special hardware
  - Use non-volatile RAM to record writes that are being executed
  - Beware: power failure during write can result in corrupted disk
    - E.g., failure after writing one block but before writing the second in a mirrored system
    - Such corrupted data must be detected when power is restored
      - Recovery from corruption is similar to recovery from failed disk
      - NV-RAM helps to efficiently detected potentially corrupted blocks
        - Otherwise all blocks of disk must be read and compared with mirror/parity block



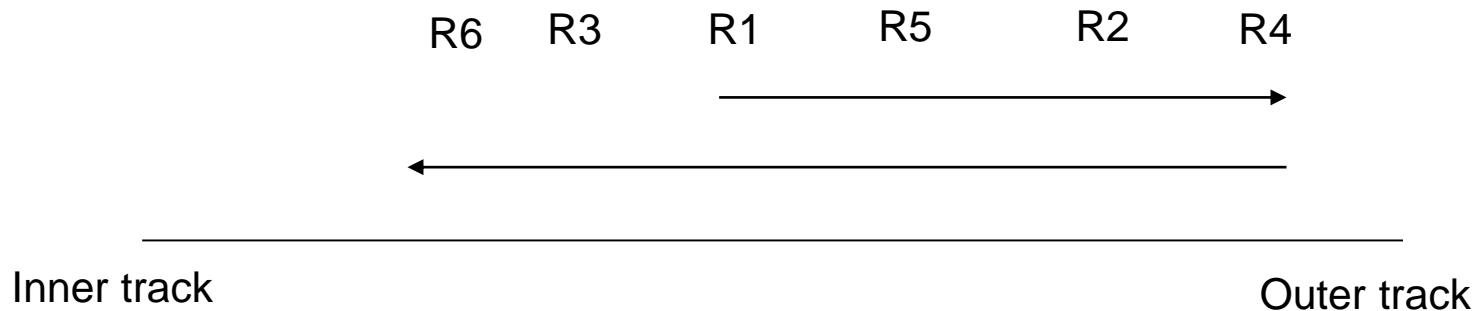
# Hardware Issues (Cont.)

- **Latent failures:** data successfully written earlier gets damaged
  - can result in data loss even if only one disk fails
- **Data scrubbing:**
  - continually scan for latent failures, and recover from copy/parity
- **Hot swapping:** replacement of disk while system is running, without power down
  - Supported by some hardware RAID systems,
  - reduces time to recovery, and improves availability greatly
- Many systems maintain **spare disks** which are kept online, and used as replacements for failed disks immediately on detection of failure
  - Reduces time to recovery greatly
- Many hardware RAID systems ensure that a single point of failure will not stop the functioning of the system by using
  - Redundant power supplies with battery backup
  - Multiple controllers and multiple interconnections to guard against controller/interconnection failures



# Optimization of Disk-Block Access

- **Buffering:** in-memory buffer to cache disk blocks
- **Read-ahead:** Read extra blocks from a track in anticipation that they will be requested soon
- **Disk-arm-scheduling** algorithms re-order block requests so that disk arm movement is minimized
  - **elevator algorithm**





# Optimization of Disk Block Access (Cont.)

## ▪ File organization

- Allocate blocks of a file in as contiguous a manner as possible
- Allocation in units of **extents**
- Files may get **fragmented**
  - E.g., if free blocks on disk are scattered, and newly created file has its blocks scattered over the disk
  - Sequential access to a fragmented file results in increased disk arm movement
  - Some systems have utilities to **defragment** the file system, in order to speed up file access

## ▪ Non-volatile write buffers



# End of Chapter 12



# Magnetic Tapes

- Hold large volumes of data and provide high transfer rates
  - Few GB for DAT (Digital Audio Tape) format, 10-40 GB with DLT (Digital Linear Tape) format, 100 GB+ with Ultrium format, and 330 GB with Ampex helical scan format
  - Transfer rates from few to 10s of MB/s
- Tapes are cheap, but cost of drives is very high
- Very slow access time in comparison to magnetic and optical disks
  - limited to sequential access.
  - Some formats (Accelis) provide faster seek (10s of seconds) at cost of lower capacity
- Used mainly for backup, for storage of infrequently used information, and as an off-line medium for transferring information from one system to another.
- Tape jukeboxes used for very large capacity storage
  - Multiple petabytes ( $10^{15}$  bytes)