LTO TAPE CAPACITY SHIPMENTS CONTINUE STRONG PERFORMANCE IN 2020 DESPITE PANDEMIC HEADWINDS

SILICON VALLEY, Calif. – The LTO Program Technology Provider Companies (TPCs), Hewlett Packard Enterprise, IBM Corporation and Quantum today released their annual tape media shipment report, detailing year-over-year shipments. The report showed 105,198 petabytes (PB) of total tape capacity (compressed) shipped in 2020, slightly short of 2019 (a record year). For context, real GDP fell to a -5% growth rate during the same time period.¹

“Despite the unexpected headwinds for many segments of the technology industry produced by the pandemic, overall LTO tape capacity shipped in 2020 was strong in context,” said Eric Bassier, Senior Director, Quantum. “Coming off record capacity shipped in 2019, we were optimistic for 2020 -- but global shutdowns and other factors outside of our collective control led to a reduced performance. We’re optimistic that there will be a return to the prior capacity growth trend in 2021 as companies return to making storage purchases, account for new trends requiring stronger security measures, and we continue to see shifts in purchases from older to newer generations of LTO tape.”

Emerging trends during the pandemic include increased ransomware attacks and other cybersecurity threats that increased in severity as remote work became the norm for millions of workers. These new vulnerabilities for corporate enterprises led to a surge to record levels of ransomware attacks in 2020, exacerbated by a distributed workforce, stretched-thin IT teams and bad cyber hygiene by remote workers. The trend reinforced the need for organizations to adopt the “3-2-1-1” backup rule, which involves at least three copies or versions of data stored on two different storage mediums, one of which is off-site and one that is offline – or an “air gap.”

Demonstrating its strong ability to protect data, LTO tape technology offers an inherent air-gap, which is essential to thwarting increasingly sophisticated ransomware and malware threats that may corrupt live, backup, and archive data simultaneously.

“LTO tape continues to keep pace with the IT market as current and emerging users discover new ways to incorporate it into their data protection practices,” said Phil Goodwin, Research Director, IDC. “The prevalence of ransomware exploded during the pandemic as the shift to remote work created more opportunities for threats to corporate networks. With the native ability to provide air gap and fast restore, LTO tape will continue to be a core component of data management best practices.”

LTO tape’s features make it a critical component of any modern-day data storage infrastructure. LTO tape offers secure and reliable long-term archival storage for data after it is no longer accessed frequently at a cost substantially lower than flash disk or cloud when considering factors such as power, cooling and retrieval.

LTO-8 technology, already available, offers up to 30TB\(^2\) of compressed capacity, with transfer speeds of up to 360 MB/sec native, 750 MB/sec compressed. When you compare native data rates LTO-8 tape is faster than the latest generations of hard disk drives with transfer rates of 210 MB/s.

The LTO Program will continue to produce annual shipment reports for tape media, which are available for download from the LTO Program website, www.lto.org.

About Linear Tape-Open (LTO)

The LTO Ultrium format is a powerful, scalable, adaptable open tape format developed and continuously enhanced by technology providers Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE), IBM Corporation and Quantum Corporation (and their predecessors) to help address the growing demands of data protection in the midrange to enterprise-class server environments. This ultra-high capacity generation of tape storage products is designed to deliver outstanding performance, capacity and reliability combining the advantages of linear multi-channel, bi-directional formats with enhancements in servo technology, data compression, track layout, and error correction.

The LTO Ultrium format has a well-defined roadmap for growth and scalability. The roadmap represents intentions and goals only and is subject to change or withdrawal. There is no guarantee that these goals will be achieved. The roadmap is intended to outline a general direction of technology and should not be relied upon in making a purchasing decision. Format compliance verification is vital to meet the free-interchange objectives that are at the core of the LTO Program. Ultrium tape mechanism and tape cartridge interchange specifications are available on a licensed basis. For additional information on the LTO Program, visit www.lto.org/trustlto and the LTO Program Web site at www.lto.org.

Note: Linear Tape-Open, LTO, the LTO logo, Ultrium, and the Ultrium logo are registered trademarks of Hewlett Packard Enterprise, International Business Machines Corporation and Quantum Corporation in the US and other countries.

\(^2\) Assumes a 2.5:1 compression achieved with larger compression history buffer available beginning with LTO generation 6 drives.