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White Paper

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DLT-V4: Quantum's Newest Tape Drive for SMBs



Quantum has announced their newest tape drive designed for small to medium-sized businesses, the DLT-V4. This drive is the next generation in the road map that began with the DLT1. The drive evolved in to the Half-Height DLT VS80 --“80” since it was capable of storing 80 GB on a cartridge at 2:1 compression—and continued with the DLT VS160, which can store 160 GB of compressed data on a cartridge.

Tape manufacturers strive to double the capacity of tape cartridges with each succeeding generation. So you would expect the next generation to be a DLT VS320 capable of storing 320 GB of data on a cartridge. Instead, we have the DLT-V4. Why is that? The answer lies in the road map which Quantum announced last year.

Quantum’s Road Map

Quantum has developed two tape drive families to meet the needs of its customers. The high-end series was formerly called the Super DLT or SDLT series. The first generation tape drive, the SDLT 220 writes 220 GB of compressed data on a cartridge. This product was followed by the SDLT 320 which writes 320 GB of compressed data and subsequently the SDLT 600 drive, which stores 600 GB of compressed data on a cartridge. The roadmap for the lower-end drives started with the DLT VS80 and was followed by the DLT VS160.

But Quantum has decided to simplify its naming convention, starting with the fourth - generation drive, for both the high-end and lower-end families. Rather than use the name to denote the capacity of the drive, each drive will be numbered sequentially. So the next high-end drive was called the DLT-S4 (“S” for super) and will be followed by the DLT-S5. The recently announced lower-end drive is the DLT-V4 (“V” for value, “4” for the fourth generation), which will be succeeded by the DLT-V5.

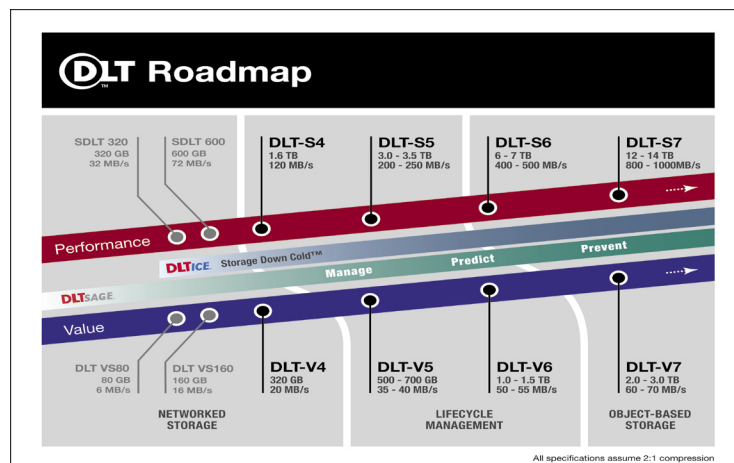


Chart 1. DLT Roadmap

Chart 1 shows Quantum’s roadmap from the second through the seventh generations. Starting with the fourth generation of drives, all Quantum drives are named DLT, followed by “V” for value or “S” for super, and then the generation number. Customers can view the technology consistently from technology futures to shipping product.

About the DLT-V4

The DLT-V4 can, as expected, store twice the capacity of its predecessor, the DLT VS160, and is about 25% faster (20 MB/second versus 16 MB/second). Why didn't Quantum double the speed while doubling the capacity? Quantum talked to its customers and learned that when they evaluated tape drives, price was their primary concern, followed by capacity. Performance was further down their list of priorities.

So Quantum decided to deliver the DLT V-4 with twice the capacity at a price of \$999. Included in this price are a DLTtape VS1 tape cartridge, a cleaning cartridge, and a copy of VERITAS Backup Exec QuickStart edition software.

Customers with older DLT drives can continue to read the cartridges created by the three previous generations of tape drives—DLT1, DLT VS80, and DLT VS160. For customers with older servers, the DLT-V4 supports Ultra 160 SCSI. However, DLT-V4 will also support SATA connections; it is one of the first tape drives to support this protocol.

Tape Drives for the SMB Market

What does the small to medium-sized customer want in a tape drive? They want a tape drive that costs \$1,000 or less. They want the cartridge to be affordable. And they want a drive that is easy to manage. Quantum has reduced the cost of its DLTtape VS1 cartridge to about \$39. If you fill up the DLTtape VS1 cartridge with 320 GB of data, then the cost of the media is only 12 cents a gigabyte—a new low price-point when comparing media costs for similar drives.

Quantum has also made the management tool for its tape family, DLTSage, available for the first time on a Value Line tape drive product. Additionally, Quantum has plans to simplify the user interface: rather than a separate application, the user will be able to easily access the DLTSage information through the Windows device manager. Customers can just right click on the tape drive, display its properties, and see important information about the drive and media, such as serial number, firmware revision level, when the next cleaning should occur, and how many GB are stored on the cartridge. There is a handy link at the bottom that directs customers to Quantum's website to view documentation about that specific tape drive. And if the firmware needs to be updated, DLTSage will step customers through that process. Quantum expects this simplified interface to be available before the end of the year.

One last feature that deserves mention is WORM support. Many SMBs do not fall under the government regulations that require, for example, that emails be retained in an unmodified format for seven years. Nevertheless, these customers should, as good business practice, retain sensitive information contained in emails or other documents for



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several years. Writing this data to WORM tape ensures that the information can never be modified by a disgruntled employee. Other tape vendors require special WORM cartridges to be purchased at a higher premium than regular cartridges. Quantum, with its *DLT/ce* feature, allows any cartridge to be used as a WORM cartridge.

Quantum's new DLT-V4 drive offers an easy-to-manage solution for SMB customers who need a cost-effective way to back up and protect their data. ■

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