

A Salty Step to the Future's Bigger Hard Drives

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19 October 2011

Salt might cause havoc to your blood pressure, but it could also be key to boosting hard drive capacities by 6 times, according to the Institute of Materials Research and Engineering (IMRE) at Singapore's Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR).



The discovery (a collaboration with the National University of Singapore and the Data Storage Institute) involves "a process that can increase the data recording density of hard disks to 3.3 Terabits per square inch, six times the recording density of current models" through the addition of sodium chloride (regular table salt) to the manufacturing process.

The addition of salt to the HDD development solution causes the creation of smaller, regular bit patterns on the surface of each magnetic platter-- boosting data storage capacities to 1.7 terabits per square inch, with the capacities of up to 3.3 terabits per square inch also possible.

In comparison the latest drive models hold up to 500 gigabits per square inch.

The researchers say the new process could be commercialised by 2016-- with the advantage of using the same equipment and technology already in use in disk media manufacture.

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