

RE: [SLE] Need help diagnosing hardware problem

Source: <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/SuSE/2006-10/msg01049.html>

- *From:* "Greg Wallace" <gregwallace@xxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Mon, 16 Oct 2006 23:30:07 -0500
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On Monday, October 16, 2006 @ 8:00 PM, M. Harris wrote:

On Monday 16 October 2006 19:19, Greg Wallace wrote:

I'm starting to suspect the video card as the problem myself. Other than the instance with the two beeps (which might could be caused by a video card problem, though I have no way of knowing), all of the other cases resulted in me not seeing any activity on the screen at boot up. I mean

I

didn't even get the bios screen. Then there was the time when the screen was just completely covered in garbage.

This is one of four things, which can be checked in order:

- 1) memory
- 2) video card/memory
- 3) power supply
- 4) main logic board

I used the Dell diagnostic tool to check the memory, processor, etc. All checked out ok. However, I don't think it checked power supply.

Before you do anything else, take the thing apart (use an ESD wrist strap) and reseal all of your connectors. Actually unplug the DIMMS (memory

modules) and replug them. Unplug the power supply connectors and reseal them. Gently unplug all connectors on the main board and reseal them.

Unplug

your cards (particularly your video card if its not on-board) and reseal them. Reboot and see what happens.

All of this is way over my head. I don't even know what an ESD wrist

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strap is. What are connectors? The Dell diagnostic tool ran several tests against the memory and that all seemed ok. What are the power supply connectors?

I'll try unplugging and re-plugging the video card, but first I've found some information on line about my computer that might help me. Turns out there are 4 diagnostic lights in the back of the machine. Normally, they should all be green. If one or more of them are yellow, then the particular pattern tells you the source of your problem. E. g., green-yellow-yellow-yellow = Possible BIOS failure; the computer is in the recovery mode, green-yellow-green-yellow = Possible video card failure or bad on-board video, etc. So, at this point, I think I'll wait until the machine freezes again and see what those lights tell me. That will save me a lot of effort if I get a specific diagnosis. If not, I can come back and address some of the issues you mention here.

I am really curious about this power supply component though. Where is it and how do you go about swapping it out?

Is your video card an nVidia chip set? If so, try another one...
voodoo,
etc.

It's a Radeon

I keep an 250 watt power supply in the closet for this purpose... basically, swap out the power supply with a known good one and see if the problem goes away. Bad supplies are notorious for causing this type of failure.

Again, could you point me in the right direction as far as locating this and describe how to swap it out?

If the problem does not go away with another power supply and the video

is on-board, then your main logic board is probably bad. Intermittent problems are almost always hardware related... however, some flaky problems can be due to drivers also... have you upgraded any of your systems drivers that might correlate to the hardware problem you are experiencing?
Oh, one more thing... instead of rebooting... when your screen locks

up

have you tried bringing up a black screen console with ctrl+alt+F1 ?

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Haven't tried that, but I will.

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Kind regards,

M Harris <><

Thanks,
Greg Wallace

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