



PRODUCT REVIEW

EASEUS Data Recovery Wizard Professional by Chris Taylor

F:\ is not accessible. The file or directory is corrupted and unreadable. A minor annoyance if you have a good backup. No problem if drive F contains nothing important.

But, when my son Michael ran into this and had no backup and drive F contained the only copies of his photos from a school trip to France and Italy, well, it was kind of heart stopping. Rebooting didn't help. Facing Redmond and sacrificing a Macintosh-formatted floppy didn't help. And building a time machine so we could go back and make a backup before this occurred seemed like just a tad too much trouble.

A friend with great knowledge in the structure of files, the NTFS Master File Table, partition tables and directories tried. Alas, little was recovered. And so the disk sat on the shelf for over a year.

Then a company by the name of EASEUS contacted me and told me they wanted to donate some software to the OPCUG. One of those pieces of software was Data Recovery Wizard Professional v4.3.6 (called DRWP from here on). I decided I would give it a try and write a review for the newsletter.

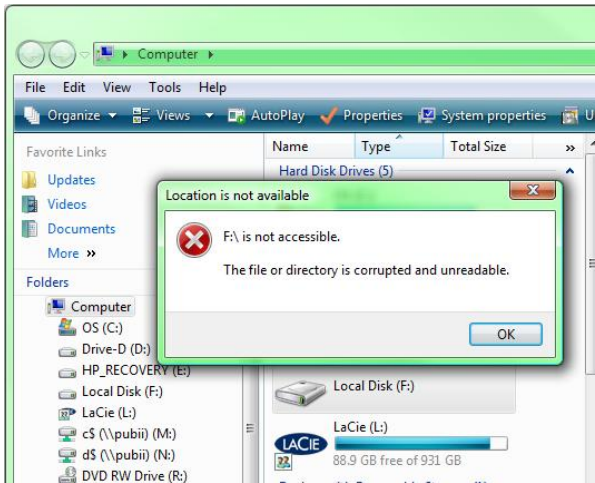


Figure 1 - Heart-stopping message



Figure 2 - Corrupted file

When DRWP loads, the interface is down-right Spartan, with three buttons labeled Deleted File Recovery, Complete Recovery, and Partition Recovery. The help file pointed me to the second button as my best choice. This led to a screen that showed all locally attached storage. It correctly identified my F drive as a Maxtor OneTouch II USB Device. I selected that and clicked the Next button.



Figure 3 - Opening screen

(Continued on page 6)

Inside this issue:

Calendar / Coming Up / Raffle	2
Review: EASEUS Data Recovery Wizard Professional	1, 6
Review: Electronic File Shredding	3
Review: Roxio Creator 2009	4-5
OPCUG Free Software Guide—Part 6	7
Contact Information	8

May Raffle

At the May meeting, thanks to the generosity of EASUS, we will be raffling off a copy of Data Recovery Wizard Professional. Did you ever get a sinking feeling because your operating system reported it could no longer read one of your hard disks? Did you ever find yourself asking, "Oops, was that really the drive I wanted to format?" Did you ever accidentally delete a directory of important files? Data Recovery Wizard Professional can help you recover from these problems and more. See Chris Taylor's [review on page 1](#) of this issue and see more details at <http://www.easeus.com/datarecoverywizardpro/>. Valued at \$90.

Raffle tickets are just \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten.

Coming Up...

► May 13th, 2009

Speaker: Chris Taylor, OPCUG

Topic: "How the Internet Works ... and Doesn't"

Did you ever wonder just how your computer knows how to get to a computer across the street or half-way around the world? And once it finds that computer, how it manages to get the information you are looking for? Come on out to the May meeting where Chris Taylor will give a presentation titled "How the Internet Works ... and Doesn't". Chris will explain in simple terms how computers on the Internet communicate. And through that, provide some tips for trouble shooting when things go wrong.

June 10th, 2009

Pizza night and speaker Roger Wambolt, Corel Corporation

Topic: Video Editing

Home Automation Presentation

At the April general meeting, Steven Totolo gave a presentation on home automation. His PowerPoint file is now available for download from The PUB at <http://opcug.ca/file/area43/automate.ppt>

You will need an account on The PUB if you want to access the file. If you don't have an account, take a look at the article Accessing PUB II in the October, 2003 issue of the newsletter - <http://opcug.ca/public/Articles/0310.pdf>. Once you have an account on The PUB, you can browse **file area 43 – Text Files – Presentations** or use the link above to access the presentation file.

April Prize Winners

Two lucky members were selected as raffle prize winners at the April 8th meeting of the OPCUG.

Both took home a copy of Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0!

Congratulations to **Jeff Dubois** and **Michael Gibson**.

2009 CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, May 13 th	7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the Canada Museum of Science and Technology , 1867 St. Laurent Blvd. http://www.science-tech.nmstc.ca/english/index.cfm
Beginners' SIG	Wednesday, May 13 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Linux SIG	Wednesday, May 13 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
PIG SIG (Wing SIG West)	Wednesday, May 13 th	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Chances "R" restaurant, Baseline Rd. at Woodroffe Ave. (College Square Shopping Centre)
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, May 13 th	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Liam Maguire's, St. Laurent Blvd. at Innes Rd.

Please note that unless otherwise noted, SIGs meet at 9:00 p.m. (immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting).

PRODUCT REVIEW

Electronic File Shredding *by Alan German*

Recently, a friend wishing to dispose of an old lap top computer asked for my assistance. She wanted to give the machine to a good home, but needed to ensure that some personal files, E-mail messages and financial information, were permanently removed from the hard drive. Could I help?

Well, no. I couldn't. But, Google certainly could. The very first hit on a search for "file shredder" provided a link to – what else? – File Shredder.

File Shredder is released under the GNU/GPL General Public License, is free for both personal and commercial use, and runs on Windows NT, 2000, XP, Server and Vista. The download is just 1.2 MB. Program installation is quick and easy by just accepting all the defaults at the various prompts.



Running the program produces a very clean user interface with an intuitive set of options. Basically, you select files and folders for deletion through a standard Explorer-type window, or by dragging and dropping them into File Shredder's main window. If you change your mind, you can remove selected files from the list. But, hit the Shred Files Now button, and the files are gone – permanently – overwritten with random series of binary data, multiple times. For the really paranoid amongst us, the Shredder Settings option allows selection from five different shredding algorithms using between 1 and 35 passes. Now, one of these should fit just about anyone's requirements.

A more all-encompassing feature is the Shred Free Disk Space option which, as the name implies, will shred currently unallocated disk sectors. This may be important if you have deleted files normally under Windows that you really wished to have securely destroyed. You can't add such files to the shredding window, since the files are in deleted status. But, we know that the information that the files contain is still on the hard disk. Windows has merely marked the files as being deleted and freed up the space for a subsequent write operation. File shredder will overwrite all such free disk space, thus removing the information from the deleted files, and making file recovery impossible.

There are a few minor quirks with the software and its documentation. Requesting the installer to Create a Desktop Icon doesn't seem to produce one. But, this is easily fixed with a simple Send to Desktop operation in Windows Explorer. There is a Help button on the Shredder Settings window that doesn't provide any information when used. And, for me, running Vista, selecting Enable Shell Integration didn't add File Shredder to my right-click menu. The program's web site (<http://www.fileshredder.org/>) is nicely done, with basic operating instructions, but there is a circular link from the on-line help page to the details of the shredding algorithms. Clicking on the link contained in "You can learn about algorithms used to shred files here" merely takes you to the top of the on-line help page. I would have been tempted to point out these minor discrepancies to the program's author, but he – or she – makes no claim to fame, either on the web site, or in the program's About option.

If you have a need for the tasks it performs, file and disk shredding, this little utility is very handy. It's small, fast, and very intuitive. So, to the program's author - whoever you are – thanks.

Bottom Line

File Shredder (Freeware)

Version 2.0

<http://www.fileshredder.org/>

Free File Shredder

PRODUCT REVIEW

Roxio Creator 2009 *by Alan German*

If you need a CD burning program you will probably look at the latest version of one of the industry's leading utilities – Roxio Creator 2009. But, you will find that you get so much more than just the ability to burn CD's and DVD's. Creator 2009 will also let you work with digital movies, music files, and digital photographs, providing sophisticated tools to capture, edit, and store these different types of media.

The program interface is clean, colourful, and very intuitive to use, with the most recently used items displayed as icons in the central window. The main program elements are permanently displayed in a side bar on the left of the program window. Selecting any one of these brings up a sub-menu of specific tasks. For the most part, clicking on a given task launches a sub-program that opens in a new window.

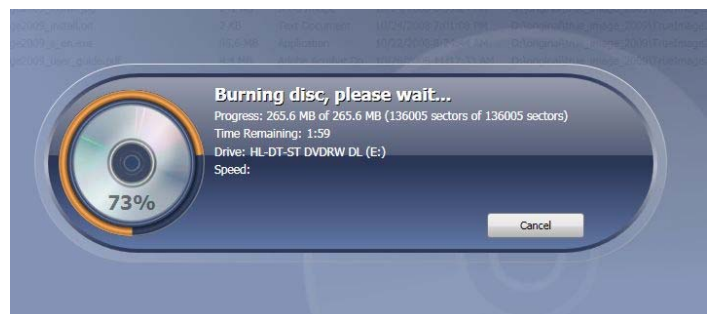


The *Data – Copy* option is the source of tools for disk burning activities, with options to create disks, copy disks, and backup files. The *Burn Data Disk* task provides a project window where you can browse for files or folders, and then add them to a list of items to be burnt to a CD or DVD. Individual files and folders can be added by browsing a disk directory tree and selecting desired items, or by dragging and dropping them from Windows Explorer into the project window. You can further tailor the list by adding more files or folders or removing specific items. A quick scan feature lets you

add all of the files of specific types, such as e-mail messages, photographs, or music files, in specified locations.

One of my favourite aspects of the program is that if you insert an appendable disk, you are asked if you would like to load the contents of the disk into the current project. You can then open an existing directory and add new files to that directory. This provides a very convenient way of storing sets of files that accumulate additions over time, such as an archive of OPCUG's newsletters. It is also possible to delete a file or a folder from a disk, for example in order to correct an error in a file burnt to disk by effectively overwriting the file with an updated version. Obviously, on a write-once medium such as a CD-R, you can't reclaim the space taken up by the deleted file, but the deletion process has the effect of removing the file that is no longer required and thus "cleans up" the file system.

A really handy feature is a bar graph at the bottom of the display window that tracks how much of the target disk is in use, and how much free space remains, so that it's very easy to manage the burning process. An *Options* button lets you change important features like leaving a partially full disk open so that additional material can be added later, and selecting between the safest (verification) and fastest modes of burning. Interestingly, the options window refers only to DVD's – "I want to leave the DVD open so that I can continue to write to it" – whereas clearly the options apply equally to both CD's and DVD's. But, hit the big green *Go* button, and the burning process starts automatically, with an animated display indicating progress to completion.



(Continued on page 5)

Roxio Creator (Continued from page 4)

For users of older versions of Roxio's Creator series, the advanced burning option launches the *Creator Classic* utility. Some other options are to burn a disk from an ISO file or create an ISO file from a disk, to make a copy of a CD or DVD, and to create disk labels.

Creator 2009 also features file backup and restore. The *BackonTrack* utility lets you select a folder for backup, the files within this folder that are to be included, and provides the ability to set a daily, weekly or monthly backup schedule if so desired. A second option allows for the restoration of an existing backup folder.

Those of you who own digital camcorders will find the program's video functions useful. There is everything from transferring video from the camera to the hard disk or direct to DVD, through editing the footage, to burning the final product to DVD, and even a video player system to manage and view your movie files.

A similar set of tools is available for processing digital photographs. Images can be downloaded from a digital camera and then processed in an editing suite with more than three dozen tools to let you crop the image; change the brightness, contrast and colour; fix red eye; and much more. A separate feature allows such edits to be made to multiple images. Optional outputs include slideshows, panoramas, picture albums, greeting cards and calendars in addition to a variety of print formats (e.g. contact sheets), and the ability to send images by

E-mail, or share them with family and friends on the web using *Roxio Online*.

For music lovers there are tools to rip tracks from CD's or to record music captured by the sound card. There are editing capabilities to combine and refine various sound tracks, convert files to MP3 format, the ability to add song titles and artist information, options to create playlists or audiobooks for use on iPod's or other music players, and to tools to burn your music collections to CD or DVD.

*This is not
a program for the
faint of heart.*

The program's help system uses lots of colour and graphics to supplement the generally clear instructions. The backup and restore functions were new to me but, interestingly, these doesn't seem to be any mention of these in the help system, nor is *BackonTrack* included as a search term. But, as noted earlier, Creator's functions are very intuitive so a little missing information in the help files is no big deal. A second option in the help menu leads to a set of files labeled as *Tutorials*. Once again, these are very colourful, and have information that can be readily assimilated; however, they are more along the lines of general descriptions of the program's features, rather than detailed how-to guides. But, overall, there is lots of useful information in the help system, and it's generally easy to locate the detail required.

This is not a program for the faint of heart. There are many integrated modules and the complete package weighs in at approximately 1.5 GB on the hard disk. Also, you also shouldn't be in a hurry to use any of the program's features. It takes a surprising two minutes or so for the program to load on my dual-core machine. But, once in place, there is a wealth of choices to process any of your electronic media files.

Bottom Line

Roxio Creator 2009
Proprietary (\$99.99)
Sonic Solutions
<http://www.roxio.com/>



Data Recovery Wizard Pro *(Continued from page 1)*

A dialog box labeled *Intelligent Searching* told me it was going to run for about 6 hours, so I went to bed while it happily went about its business.

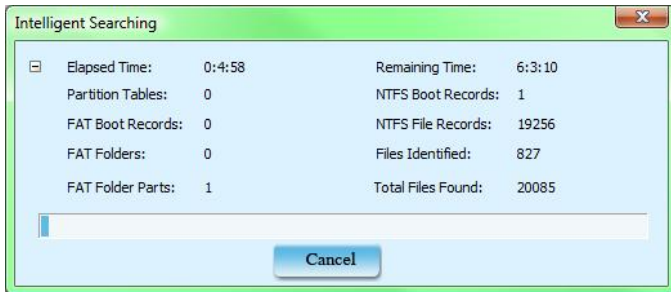


Figure 4 - Searching for files

In the morning, DRWP had found 21,344 files totalling 187 GB. There were two categories of files found - *Raw Files* and *Lost Files*. The help file told me I should recover both. DRWP needs to recover files to a different drive, so I cleared off a couple of hundred GB on my LaCie Terabyte drive and started the restoration.

DRWP started with *Raw Files* and created a series of directories on the destination drive for types of files, such as *JPEG Graphics File* and *MP3 Music File*. After a couple of hours, these directories were filled with files with names like *FILE001.JPG* and *FILE650.MP3*. Okay, so the file names and directories they came from were lost. But if the data was good... Alas, the data was not good. All but the smallest of files seemed to start with good data, but then have junk afterwards. And it found a disappointing 3,346 files. What about the other 17,998 files?

It turns out that the *Raw Files* are just scraps that DRWP found on disk that did not match up with any of the directory information that was recovered. DRWP recovers these files by ignoring the file structures and looking at the unallocated space on disk. It finds the signatures of different file types by their headers. They were files that had been deleted over time. In many cases, parts of the disk were re-used for other files and so only fragments were found by DRWP. If the file structures that define where the files are (partition table, Master File Table, and directories) had all been unrecoverable, I would have been left with just *Raw Files*. If the files had used contiguous space on disk, they would have been mostly recoverable. I would have only lost the file names.

After it finished with *Raw Files*, DRWP started on the *Lost Files*. All of a sudden, it was building the original directory structure on the destination drive and filling it with files with correct names, such as *France Trip (first half) 781.jpg* and *Blue Rodeo - Bad Timing.mp3*. It was truly amazing to see the files coming back.

A couple of hours later, it reported that it had recovered 21,342 out of 21,344 files. And this time, every single one of the files were perfect! Okay, I haven't checked all 21,342 yet.



Figure 5 - 21,342 files recovered!

I asked Michael what it would be worth to him if I could recover all his files from the corrupted drive. Does it count if he promised to *try* to keep the kitchen clean?

Other magic DRWP can perform includes recovering deleted files, formatted hard drives, and disks with damaged or missing partition tables.

DRWP can deal with disks with FAT12, FAT16, FAT32, NTFS, EXT2, and EXT3 file systems. It supports IDE/ATA, SATA, SCSI, USB, Fire wire (IEEE1394) hard disks and other media such as floppy disk, USB flash drive, digital camera, and digital audio players.

A couple of tips: First, if you have to count on the *Raw Files* recovery, it helps if files are contiguous, so you will improve your chances immensely if you keep your hard drives defragmented. And second, if you have a problem with a drive and you think you will need to perform a recovery, *STOP* doing anything that could be writing to the disk. Any writing will decrease the chances of recovery.

I wonder what was in those two files that could not be recovered. Oh well, I guess a 99.991% success rate is pretty good. ☺

While EASEUS has some other software for recovering lost data, DRWP is the most comprehensive. Visit their web site at <http://www.easeus.com> to see other programs they have. And pick up a copy of the free program for managing disk partitions, Partition Master.

Bottom Line

EASEUS Data Recovery Wizard Professional v4.3.6
<http://www.easeus.com>
 US\$89.95

System requirements:

Windows 2000/XP/2003/Vista
 128MB RAM minimum
 32 MB disk space for installation
 Enough space on a good drive to store the files recovered from the bad drive

OPCUG Free Software Guide—Part 6 Compiled by Alan German

This guide features an annotated list of free computer programs. The software mentioned has not been reviewed (except where noted) nor have any tests necessarily been conducted. Consequently, no guarantees are provided that the individual programs will perform as described. Rather the list of available software is provided for the information of our members who may find one or more of the programs useful. If you try one of the listed items, you are encouraged to share your experience, good or bad, by providing a brief review of the program for a future issue of the newsletter.

LEGO Digital Designer 2

Feel like a kid again! Amaze your grandchildren. Use your computer to create (virtual) Lego masterpieces. This package gives you a box chock full of Lego pieces – as many as you want – any type, any colour. The program runs under Windows XP or Vista.

Web Site: <http://ldd.lego.com/>



µTorrent

BitTorrent is a peer-to-peer file sharing protocol used for downloading large files. µTorrent is a lightweight and efficient BitTorrent client for Windows.

Current Release: Version 1.8.2

Web Site: <http://www.utorrent.com>

Skype

Talk, send instant messages, or make video calls over the Internet with this free software. Skype-to-Skype calls are free, so use your high-speed Internet connection, and your webcam, to chat face-to-face with friends and family across the country or around the world.

Current Release: Version 4.0

Web Site: <http://www.skype.com>

Microsoft Virtual PC 2007

Need a virtual machine to run legacy programs? This free package from Microsoft is focused on running older versions of Windows. It doesn't support all the latest toys (e.g. no USB support), but it is free!

Web Site: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/virtualpc>

Previous Review: *Connectix Virtual PC for Windows*, Morris Turpin, <http://opcug.ca/public/Reviews/connectix.html>

Recuva

This freeware Windows utility will try to help you restore files that have been accidentally deleted from your computer. These include files emptied from the recycle bin, files deleted from digital camera memory cards or MP3 players, and even files lost because of computer crashes and viruses.

Current Release: Version 1.24.399

Web Site: <http://www.recuva.com/>



GParted

The Gnome Partition Editor – GParted – was obviously built for the Gnome desktop on Linux systems, but it comes in the form of a bootable CD so it can be readily run by Windows' users. GParted will let you change the partitions on your hard disk - add new ones, delete or resize existing partitions – all through an easy-to-use graphical interface. It supports FAT and NTFS, in addition to Linux ext and swap partitions.

Current Release: Version 0.4.3

Web Site: <http://gparted.sourceforge.net/>

Previous Review: *GParted – A little open-source "partition magic"*, Alan German
<http://opcug.ca/public/Reviews/GParted.htm>

OTTAWA PC NEWS

Ottawa PC News is the newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group (OPCUG), and is published monthly except in July and August. The opinions expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily represent the views of the club or its members.

Member participation is encouraged. If you would like to contribute an article to Ottawa PC News, please submit it to the newsletter editor (contact info below). Deadline for submissions is three Sundays before the next General Meeting.

Group Meetings

OPCUG meets on the second Wednesday in the month, except July and August, at the Canada Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd, Ottawa. Meetings are 7:30–9:00 p.m. and Special Interest Groups go until 10 p.m.

Fees:	OPCUG membership:	\$25 per year
Mailing Address:	3 Thatcher St., Nepean, Ontario, K2G 1S6	
Web address:	http://opcug.ca	
Bulletin board — PUB II (BBS)	http://opcug.ca/default.htm	
President and System Administrator		
Chris Taylor	chris.taylor@opcug.ca	613-727-5453
Meeting Coordinator		
Bob Gowan	bob.gowan@opcug.ca	
Treasurer		
Alan German	alan.german@opcug.ca	
Secretary		
Gail Eagen	gail.eagen@opcug.ca	
Membership Chairman		
Mark Cayer	mark.cayer@opcug.ca	613-823-0354
Newsletter		
Brigitte Lord (editor/layout)	brigitte.lord@opcug.ca	
(Mr.) Jocelyn Doire (e-mail distribution)	jocelyn.doire@opcug.ca	
Public Relations		
Morris Turpin	PR@opcug.ca	613-729-6955
Facilities		
Bob Walker		613-489-2084
Webmaster		
Brigitte Lord	opcug-webmaster2@opcug.ca	
Privacy Director		
Wayne Houston	privacy@opcug.ca	
Special Events Coordinator		
Don Chiasson		
Beginners' SIG		
Chris Taylor	chris.taylor@opcug.ca	613-727-5453
Linux / Open-Source Software SIG		
Don Chiasson		

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