

Forum:[Hack Forums](#)

Thread: [best data recovery tools?](#)

markoff - May 18, 2019, 3:35 pm

Greetings all,

I saw a recent post where the OP was asking which data recovery software people think is best. I was very surprised to find my favorite utility was not mentioned ... now the thread is closed so I am opening a new one.

The very best data recovery tool I have ever used is called testdisk. It's free software and it is available for both linux and windows. You can find it at the developers website cgsecurity.org.

I cannot tell you how many times testdisk has saved me from losing data. You need to be sure to run it from the command line using an account with administrative rights.

In linux the command would be "sudo testdisk" - most distributions will either come with it installed or will have it available in the package manager but if you can't find it that way it's not difficult to find on the web and compile/install it manually. I had no problem getting it working myself that way but most people won't need to do that anyway.

Windows users will need to download and install it but it is completely free. Be sure to download the pdf Documentation for instructions on how to use testdisk to recovery partitions, undelete files, and/or repair file systems. I know that when I used windows I dreaded command line utilities ... most of the time they ended up being a waste of time for me because I needed to use command line extensions but couldn't figure out how to do so from the limited documentation that was available. It seemed to me at that time that the help that was provided would only make sense to somebody who already knew how to do the things they were explaining. This used to really upset me. I can assure you that this is not going to happen with testdisk. You don't need to put every config option into the initial command. Testdisk takes you through a series of menu choices. If you consider yourself a windows power user then you shouldn't have any trouble knowing what to do.

Testdisk is an amazing utility but it was not obvious to me initially how to use it to recover partitions or files so I will include instructions on how to do so here.

This procedure applies to both the windows and linux versions:

When you run testdisk, after you have:

- answered the question about the log
- told it which disk you wish it to be looking at
- verified which type of partition table that disk is using

you will then see a menu that includes "OPTIONS." Go in to options, scroll up to "Expert Mode" and hit the enter key to enable expert mode. You will see the No that follows expert mode change to a Yes. You can then scroll down to OK and hit the enter key again to go back to the previous menu. What you do at this point depends upon what you are trying to recover.

If you need to recover an entire lost partition you should choose Analyse. Testdisk will begin scanning the disk looking for partitions ... It's going to take a while.

If you are trying to recover a single or multiple files or folders you should choose Advanced. After choosing Advanced testdisk will show you a list of the partitions on that disk. Use the up/down

arrow keys to make sure the partition that is highlighted is the one where the lost files or folders were located then hit the left/right arrow keys so that that option highlighted at the bottom of the page is "List". You can then hit enter. At this point testdisk becomes very intuitive so I will end this here save for one warning ... when testdisk asks you where to save the files it recovers do not save them onto the same disk or partition you are recovering them from. Save them onto any other disk that has enough empty space. If you save them onto the same disk or partition you are recovering them from you could corrupt the file system in a big way, so just don't do it.

That's all I have to say about Testdisk.

I also wanted to mention another recovery utility that I used very recently ... it's available for linux only and is called ext4undelete. Obviously it is intended to recover deleted files from ext4 partitions. I recently had an important file that I accidentally deleted and for some reason I couldn't get it back using testdisk for some unknown reason. I looked around for alternatives and came across ext4undelete. I was not very confident it would work because the latest version available was v0.2.4 but I was very pleasantly surprised when it recovered my file quickly and easily. It was difficult for me to get the executable compiled initially due to missing dependencies but once I had the necessary support software installed ext4undelete compiled and the actual recovery literally took a few seconds so if you have troubles keep trying. It's worth the effort.

Ok. I'm done.

Ciao for now,

markoff

EliteTM - May 19, 2019, 12:50 am

Maybe my situation is an isolated situation. But recently I had accidentally deleted a volume. From my understanding it basically just broke the "link" to find the files. As the files are still on the hard drive. I used every single possible free data recovery tool I could possibly find and trust me I used a lot of them. One of them I tried was Testdisk. It couldn't fix my files. The only program that could actually find my files was Recuva, but I was not prepared to pay \$80 or something outrageous like that. So I used the trial which gave me access to about 2GB of files I believe, which was more than enough for what I needed to grab. All the lost files that I had not backed up. The majority of my files were already backup on an external hard drive that I had forgotten I had backed up.

markoff - May 31, 2019, 8:23 am

You mentioned deleting a "volume" ... if by volume you mean partition, testdisk is great at that, but you seem to have been more interested in recovering your files. So long as the disk had not been overwritten since you deleted the partition testdisk I am certain could have recovered your entire partition. You would just need to give it time to find that partition. I detail how to get testdisk to do this in my original post. I should state that in my windows days I used Recuva at times myself and found it to be one of the better windows recovery tools on the market ... perhaps the best windows utility. I am glad you eventually found you had a backup.

:-)

markoff

(May 19, 2019 12:50 AM)EliteTM Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Maybe my situation is an isolated situation. But recently I had accidentally deleted a volume. From my understanding it basically just broke the "link" to find the files. As the files are still on the hard drive. I used every single possible free data recovery tool I could possibly find and trust me I used a lot of them. One of them I tried was Testdisk. It couldn't fix my files. The only program that could actually find my files was Recuva, but I was not

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