

Re: hard drives dying

Source: <http://www.derkeiler.com/Newsgroups/microsoft.public.security.virus/2005-12/msg00071.html>

- *From:* Malke <notreally@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Fri, 02 Dec 2005 05:01:00 -0800
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JB wrote:

- > Hello.
- > Can a virus render a hard drive 'useless'? So that you can't boot
- > WindowsXp or recover with any bootdisks?
- > And can it be totally undetected?
- >
- > My laptop suddenly switched itself off and after numerous attempts
- > just comes up with
- > "No hard drive detected"
- > A week later my son's tower PC (winK) was playing up, then one day
- > would not reboot, saying disc sector corrupt. We had to pay an arm and
- > a leg to a tech to recover all his work and get a new hard drive.
- > Now my beloved PC is gone weird. Everything to do with start-up,
- > taskbar and system is taking around 10 minutes. It's not hanging, it's
- > like in slow motion.
- > It takes 40 minutes to reboot.
- > I am paranoid that it's also going to go. BUT the laptop was very old,
- > my son's PC not as well taken care of, Both those machines were
- > running McAfee 9 but new subscription were 2 weeks overdue.
- > Whereas my machine is a year and a half old, it is treasured and has
- > ALL the right protection, McAfee security suite, SpyDoctor, MSAntispy,
- > (which have all come up with 0 when doing scans)
- > I can't believe that it can be coincidence.
- > But if I have all this protection, how can it be a virus!?!?
- > Any advice please,
- > Jen

Coincidence is a funny thing. From your description of the problem on your machine, it does not sound like your machine has a viral problem but rather is having hardware problems. The newness of it is irrelevant. It sounds like it might have been overheating, or the power supply is failing. Since it is new, call the mftr.'s tech support or take it to a local professional. You might also want to check your electrical setup at your house. If you do not have an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS), consider getting one. You can buy these at your local computer store and a decent one for home use is under \$100. APC is a well-known mftr. of UPS's.

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General hardware troubleshooting:

- 1) Open the computer and run it open, cleaning out all dust bunnies and observing all fans (overheating will cause system freezing). Obviously you can't do this with a laptop, but you can hear if the fan is running and feel if the laptop is getting too hot.
- 2) Test the RAM – I like Memtest86+ from www.memtest.org. Obviously, you have to get the program from a working machine. You will either download the precompiled Windows binary to make a bootable floppy or the .iso to make a bootable cd. If you want to use the latter, you'll need to have third-party burning software on the machine where you download the file – XP's built-in burning capability won't do the job. In either case, boot with the media you made. The test will run immediately. Let the test run for an hour or two – unless errors are seen immediately. If you get any errors, replace the RAM.
- 3) Test the hard drive with a diagnostic utility from the mftr. Download the file and make a bootable floppy or cd with it. Boot with the media and do a thorough test. If the drive has physical errors, replace it.
- 4) The power supply may be going bad or be inadequate for the devices you have in the system. The adequacy issue doesn't really apply to a laptop, although of course the power supply can be faulty.
- 5) Test the motherboard with something like TuffTest from www.tufftest.com. Sometimes this is useful, and sometimes it isn't.

Testing hardware failures often involves swapping out suspected parts with known-good parts. If you can't do the testing yourself and/or are uncomfortable opening your computer, take the machine to a professional computer repair shop (not your local equivalent of BigStoreUSA).

Malke

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Elephant Boy Computers
www.elephantboycomputers.com
"Don't Panic!"
MS-MVP Windows – Shell/User
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• **References:**

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◇ From: JB

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