

Re: SAM corruption – help!

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<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/Win2000/microsoft.public.win2000.general/2007-10/msg00042.html>

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 - *Date:* Thu, 04 Oct 2007 13:51:52 -0300
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If you cannot use your ERD or if you cannot logon to the Recovery Console to repair the corrupted SAM then you most likely have file system or disk corruption issues. Normally you should be able to repair the SAM database with the ERD. If you want to save your files you will have to be careful, writing anything to a corrupt or failing hard disk could corrupt the disk or files even more make any file recovery impossible.

The safest thing to do would be to mount the disk to another Windows 2000/XP computer and see if the files can be read and copied off the damaged disk to another disk. You could also use a Bart's PE disk or a Linux live cd to do this.

A second alternative would be to run a `chkdsk /r` from the recovery console, but that isn't without risk! If the corruption is minor this may easily repair the error(s) and permit Windows to boot again. However if the disk is failing or if the file system corruption is serious running `chkdsk` could render all the files on the disk useless. This would be the first thing to try **after** you salvage your files or if you have no other choice.

A third alternative would be to attempt a repair installation of Windows 2000. If you cannot repair Windows the next alternative would be to do a parallel installation of Windows 2000, in other words install without formatting and install Windows in a different folder or partition than where it is now installed. Once Windows is installed you can then salvage your files. If the drive is failing or if there is significant corruption on the disk this is absolutely a last ditch effort, the last thing that should be tried. If the disk is failing attempting to write on it could completely wreck everything!

Good luck,

John

Mel wrote:

My daughter and I have identical Dell Inspiron 8000s with factory-installed Win2k. For unknown reasons mine had a catastrophic crash two days ago; I've managed to get some control back, but it appears the SAM is corrupted so I can't get into Recovery Console. For reasons which aren't yet clear I can't get it to start up in Safe Mode either, so have no way of getting a command Prompt.

I have System Recovery and Win2k reinstallation CDs, and Startup and ERD disks. However, none of these will repair or reinstall SAM. I have 2 ideas to check out:

- 1) swap my DVD writer into the other laptop and copy Win2k so that I can install/repair

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rather than reinstall and thus hopefully get SAM back in

2) upgrade to XP for long enough to backup everything and then do a clean install of Win2k, as I don't think the machine has the capability to run XP.

Any thoughts on these, r alternate ideas would be hugely appreciated! (Please bear in mind that I'm not much of a techie but can follow instructions!).

Thanks,

Mel.