

4 CONSECUTIVE CORRUPT DISK DISASTERS WITH WIN2K

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Am consistently getting a corrupted C: drive on my desktop PC computer running Windows 2000 SP4 with latest updates, firewall/virus etc installed. At least 4 crashes / complete formats/reinstalls in as many weeks. Same standard hardware & software (other than the latest Windows Updates) as when it ran fine, for years; do have many new files for My Docs, however. Tried installing on different hard disks, do a slow NTFS format beforehand, etc. Recovery Console and Emergency Repair Disks have consistently been unsuccessful in salvaging the installations.

A detailed description of SW/HW/processes would be overly long; the following is a summary in the hopes some of you recognize one of three conditions described below as being definitely related to the crashes.

Typical incident is a couple of days or so after reloading all software and about 120gb data files (about 20,000 digicamera jpgs, numerous mp3s, etc, some with longish filenames), suddenly middle of doing something seemingly unrelated, pop-up windows appear saying "C: drive [or folder therein] is unreadable / corrupt. Run chkdsk."

Have to reboot of course to run chkdsk, when it runs it finds thousands of orphan file records to delete and index entries to fix, then the disk is unbootable and lots of data and program / system files are missing; some are recovered by chkdsk. One time a "C:\\$Mft is corrupt and unreadable" message precluded the crash.

I think I have it narrowed down to 3 possible causes. Knowledgeable sorts out there, please review and advise on which one you think it might be. I'm going to avoid all three on my next reinstall, which I'm in the middle of, until I hopefully get a consensus from you:

1. Outlook 2002 (along with its required Office XP service packs) installed on a system otherwise running Office 2000 Premium. On at least one crash (the most recent), Outlook 2000 had been inadvertently installed coincidental with Outlook 2002. (I need v.2002 so that I can synch my Outlook contacts with my iPAQ PocketPC 2003 PDA). A problem initially starting that program after installation led to a corrupt web access profile error for which MS KB provided a fix. And during that latest crash, concurrent with the corrupt C:

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drive message boxes popping up were boxes asking for the Outlook 2002 installation CD, thoroughly irrelevant for what I was doing at the time.

2. Long filenames. I've found a few data files that have long names locked up in Windows 2000, unable to delete or rename them from Explorer and having to run arcane commands/switches from the Command window to get rid of them. These files include some mp3s, possibly some photos, and also some Windows Update files downloaded to disk from Microsoft Update Catalog (not Windows Update), which inexplicably appends a long string of alphanumeric characters to many of its update downloads, some of which have already long filenames. Restoration of data files from backup hard drives during re-installation initially entailed copying directly from drive to drive in Explorer, most recently using the Win2K Backup program.

3. Reorganizing the disorganized plethora of shortcuts in the Program shortcuts folders (C:\Documents and Settings\...\Start Menu\Programs) resulting from a reinstall so that all are in the \All Users\ folder under a handful of categorized parent folders. A little prior to one recent crash, the system locked up when I moved one such folder group there that it mistakenly thought were program files. And during the most recent crash yesterday, the folders were reorganized successfully a few hours earlier, but when the system crashed that was the first symptom noticed: copies of those shortcuts (MS Office ones) placed in the Quick Launch toolbar started losing their icon images; shortly thereafter the corrupt folder / C: drive messages started popping up (along with the Outlook 2002 install disk requests) and the system went down and out.

That's it; already verbose. Obviously a major malfunction. Quick reactions from the experts out there please: any of these situations ring a bell for correlation with sudden NTFS disk corruption?

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