

What caused this crash?

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I have an Acer aspire 3000 laptop. Recently, while playing poker online, it suddenly crashed and rebooted. When it restarted the bios came and went fine, but the only thing that happened after that was a blinking cursor in the upper left hand corner of a black screen. It was un-responsive to anything except ctrl-alt-delete, which only rebooted it to the same screen. I had noticed an odd error in Photoshop a few days before. Photoshop would load normally, only the "background" of the application was not there. That is, the photoshop toolbars were there, but where the screen is normally white, the "canvas" so to speak, you could see the desktop. Also, wherever there was black text on the tools and menus, you could also see the desktop. I could not load any file of any extension, nor could I create a new file. Besides the Photoshop bug, everything else ran fine.

I was online playing poker when the crash occurred. I had numerous notepad windows running, not all of which were saved. I have never made any physical modifications of the laptop hardware at all, though I have had to re-install Windows XP three times previously after becoming infected with spyware. Each time I re-installed I did it from a separate partition where the Acer software had installed all the back up files, e.g., I did not re-install from CD. It didn't seem like the hard drive was entirely formatted when I did this, and indeed a third partition, "drive D" was left exactly as it was with all data intact after every restore. I will also say that at times I ran my laptop for extended periods and the underneath of it sometimes grew quite hot. I also frequently simply closed it up when I was done with it, which sets it into hibernation mode.

I decided to try to re-install on top of windows hoping not to lose any data that I did not have backed up. After switching to boot from CD in the bios and rebooting, an error came up which stated the drive was invalid: abort, retry, or fail. I chose the fail option a few times and then was asked if I wanted to restore the hard drive. Noting that all data would be lost, I chose to try something else. I downloaded a copy of Knoppix Live Cd on my other computer, burned the disc, and booted up to linux. The first partition, the one with all of Acer's restore files, was fine and readable, though icons were created for the other two partitions, they were not accessible, and unmountable.

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Seeing as though I had no other choice, I went back to my restore CD and restored via that route. A funny thing then occurred. After having switched out all the discs and being told to go back to the origina