

# 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 original "system" disk, the installation hung. It froze while "copying data" at 40% complete. I ctrl-alt-deleted a few times and the installation would resume, again freezing at 40%. Disgusted, I decided to reboot off the hard drive in an attempt to stop the installation process so I could do it all over again and hope for better results. At this point however, windows booted up normally off the hard drive and I went through the standard "first run" procedures—set time zone, language, user names, etc. It now appears to be working fine but every time I boot up, a DOS screen comes up which says it is checking for LAN connections. I have let this go for a number of minutes, but it never seems to cancel itself out—my laptop is not hooked up to any LAN. I end up having to press esc to skip this check, and then Windows XP boots up normally.

After I had everything set to go I went into to the D drive to check to see if there was anything there, upon doing this I was told I had to format the drive, which I did. I also went to immediately restore the computer off of the hard drive so as to complete the installation process. Normally this is started by pressing alt-f10, which will send you in to the restore options. Now, however, this hotkey does nothing. Before when I re-installed off the hard drive restore partition, the D drive partition was left intact, and the computer never ran a LAN test during boot up.

Things seem to be working normal now except for the LAN check, but this is only the first day. I would like to get opinions on what might have caused this crash. I would very much like to take any and all preventative measures to insure this doesn't happen again. I would also like to see if it is possible to get back any of the lost data. I own a copy of getdataback, but the documentation states I need to run it off a sperate hard drive to get it to work. I am not very anxious to open up my laptop and take out the hard drive. I am wondering if I can run getdataback off another partition, say the D drive. Getdataback's documentation also stated I could run it off a live CD, but I don't have a proper copy of XP. I have a version issued by Acer that is spaced out between 4 CDs, and I am not sure if I could even create an XP live CD.

Thanks for all help in advance.

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