

MacUser

PROSOFT engineering, inc.

DISK REPAIR TOOL Drive Genius



Price £61.34 (£52.20 ex VAT) from Amazon.co.uk
Contact AM Micro 01392 426473 + prosofteng.com
Pros Fixed almost all problems + Clear interface
Cons None significant

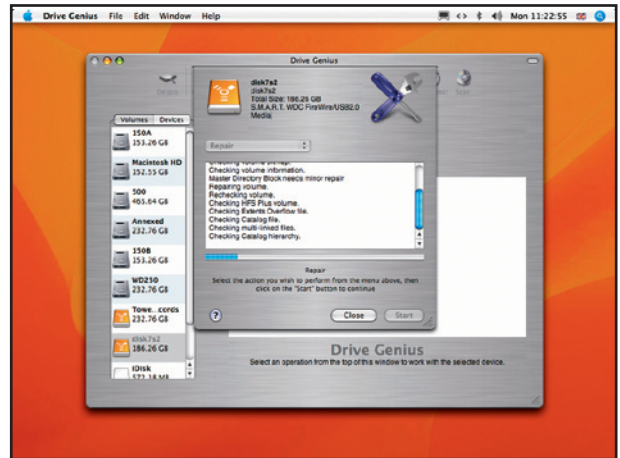
Prosoft's Drive Genius proved itself

worthy of its name two years ago when we last looked this closely at disk utilities. Since then, it has become a Universal Binary application and is used by Apple in its ProCare programme, an impressive accolade indeed.

When we put Drive Genius to the test this time around, it stood up as well as it did before. It remained unflustered by any of the problems we gave it, finding and working on disk volumes even when they refused to show up at all in most other tools. This proved to be the only tool other than Apple's own Disk Utility capable of finding and repairing our test volume with damage to the master directory

blocks. This isn't a common fault, but it only takes a few key blocks to go bad for your precious hard drive to start acting like a high-tech brick. Drive Genius was the only tool that managed to fix this, and it returned our drive to healthy, working status without fuss. We did eventually find ways of mucking up a drive so that Drive Genius couldn't work with it. Even so, this did do the best job all round, even pipping Disk Warrior at the post. The verify, repair and rebuild processes are presented in a clear and undramatic manner, so you won't feel you're meddling with things you shouldn't. Most operations are also performed fairly quickly, which is always a good thing when you're on the verge of panic. When we investigated the recovered volumes after each recovery process, we were never disappointed, apart from with our most extreme torture test.

Drive Genius provides several other goodies, including Scan, for testing for



bad blocks, disk image creation for copying volumes, file defragmenting, and Shred, a secure erase process that can wipe free space or your entire drive to a level that meets US Department of Defence security standards.

As well as running as a standalone utility, Drive Genius comes on a Universal Binary bootable disc ready for Intel and PowerPC Macs. We recommend always knowing where this is on your shelves. For disk repair, this is the business.

FILE RECOVERY TOOL Data Rescue II



Price £54.99 (£46.80 ex VAT) from Amazon.co.uk
Contact AM Micro 01392 426473 + prosofteng.com
Pros A little faster than the competition + Finds deleted files + Rescues data from damaged disks
Cons Results may need renaming

Prosoft's second entry in this Software

Labs test is Data Rescue II. As its name suggests, this is a utility dedicated to rescuing data rather than repairing drives, which makes it a good complementary product to Drive Genius. It concentrates on finding readable files from a recalcitrant disk, scouring the entire structure rather than looking at a probably damaged directory listing. Curiously, this was the only tool that had separate PowerPC and Intel boot discs. The software is Universal, however, so there's no other difference.

Data Rescue II offers a few options when it

comes to looking through your disk for data. The Quick Scan method is recommended as the first thing to try, although it may not find everything. This was the case in our experience, although it did a fair job most of the time. The Thorough Scan method took significantly longer, but it did find items that Quick Scan missed. The Deleted Files method is meant for times when your disk is working well and you need to recover files that have been deleted rather than for rescuing work from a failing disk.

Finally, we liked that we could save a file scan attempt as a file and use it later on. The scanning process can take a long time, especially the Thorough Scan option, so this let us pick up where we left off.

The Expert view adds Analyse and Clone to the choices. Analyse can give a rough idea of the volume's ability to be read by Data

Rescue II, which is useful where hardware-specific problems might cause data read



issues. In these cases using Clone, the final option, to make a bit-level duplicate of the drive on a different device is a useful strategy.

Prosoft claims Data Rescue II's strategy for performing its job means it produces better results than its competitors. While we found this claim difficult to substantiate – the two direct competitors did excellent jobs themselves – it's good at what it does. Apple's recent worldwide internal licence for Data Rescue II bears testament to this.

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The winners

MacUser Labs tests, whether for hardware or software, try to find the very best out of the collection of products on test, helping you choose which single item you should buy. However, things are not quite that straightforward in this Labs. We have selected a winner, or rather one winner for each of the two categories, but we also recommend that you consider buying at least one of the other tools

as well. There's no room for personal preferences when it comes to disk and file recovery, so make sure you have everything you need when you need it. Quite seriously, if you can afford it, buy them all.

When it came to disk recovery and repair, all of the products, including Apple's Disk Utility, have something to offer. Alsoft's Disk Warrior deserves a special mention, as it handled itself well and presented the least stressful interface of them all – a rather important point when you're faced with the possible loss of a precious hard disk. In the end, though, it was Prosoft's Drive Genius that convinced us, as it handled the widest range

of faults and managed to do this without fuss or a confusing array of options, earning its place once more as the king of the disk repair tools.

The file recovery tools also presented something of a challenge when it came to picking the best of the bunch. In particular, SubRosaSoft's FileSalvage was a very strong contender for this crown: its abilities to restore files that had been thrown away and recover data from scrambled and even physically damaged drives was close to miraculous. However, in the end, it was Prosoft's Data Rescue II that came out on top. Data Rescue II performed as well as FileSalvage, but its other options clinched the deal. Its scanning process runs a little more quickly, and the list of found files can be examined just a little more easily.

We're sure the software developers will understand when we say that we hope we'll never need either of these tools – or any of the others we tested. But we'll certainly sleep a little more soundly after seeing what Drive Genius, Data Rescue II and the rest can do.

▼ Drive Genius wins the award for disk recovery and repair for its handling of the widest range of faults without fuss.



▲ Data Rescue II clinched the top spot for its scanning speed and extra options.



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