

Reviews



Drive Genius 3

by L. Davenport

Drive Genius is a program that lets you maintain, manage, and optimize your hard drive. It comes with thirteen different tools that you can use to check the health of and repair your volumes.

The **Repair tool** checks for and repairs problems found on your hard drive. The five repair functions are:

- **Verify** scans for problems.
- **Repair** repairs any found errors
- **Rebuild** will rebuild the drive table (commonly referred to as the Catalog B-Tree)
- **Repair Permissions** resets the ownership and permissions
- **Verify Preferences** looks for errors in your application preferences. If any are located, Drive Genius will display the corrupted preference file so the user can delete it.



Drive Genius' tools

The **Defrag** tool; There is an ongoing debate as to the necessity of defragmenting your hard drive under OS X. Some say it is necessary, others say its not. I was surprised to see how fragmented my partition was, especially since I kept hearing that OS X automatically defragments your volume. But I went ahead and let it defragment my partition and everything worked like a charm. So if you fall into the “You need to defragment your hard drive to increase overall speed” camp, then this tool will be helpful to you.

The **Duplicate** tool lets you duplicate (or clone) one drive to another. If the original is a bootable drive, the duplicate will also be bootable. Drive Genius uses the *Device Copy* method which is a faster way of backing up your drive (versus the normal file-by-file method). Duplicate’s “Verify the destination copy” option will confirm that the duplicating process was completed successfully. This is especially handy if your source drive has bad blocks, etc.

The **DriveSlim** tool is helpful when you are running low on hard drive space. It will detect and then delete or archive large, unused or duplicate files. It also gives you an option to delete un-need binaries, i.e. if you are running on an Intel Mac, you can tell it to delete the 32-bit binaries and vice versa for Power PC Macs.

The **Sector Edit** tool gives you the ability to access and modify bits and bytes of your disk or volume. This is for expert users who really know what they are doing. It is not recommended for novices. You can do real damage if you don't know what you are doing.

The **Shred** tool follows the Department Of Defense 5220.22-M standard for overwriting your drive or volume. In effect, Shred completely erases your drive so no sensitive information can be retrieved by unscrupulous people who get their hands on your drive. You have a choice of overwriting you drive, 1, 3, 7 or 35 times. Shred is compatible with SCSI, USB, IDE (ATA), SATA and Firewire hard drives. In addition to erasing your whole drive, you can also shred a single folder or the free space on your drive.

The **Integrity Check** tool will test the overall integrity of your drive. This is accomplished by performing multiple read and writes of various block sizes to and from your hard drive.

The **Benchtest** tool tests the performance and efficiency of your volumes. The results can be displayed as a bar graph, line graph or raw data. These Benchtest reports can be saved so you can compare your current results with your previously saved results. You can also compare your results against Benchtest reports (from the current Macintosh systems) that comes with the program.

The **Scan** tool will scan all of the blocks on your hard drive to see if each one can be written to and read from. If any bad blocks are found, you can have Disk Genius instruct the hard drive to ignore them.

The **Information** tool will list the technical details about your hard drive or volume. It covers such things as: such as partition ID, total blocks, and partition scheme.

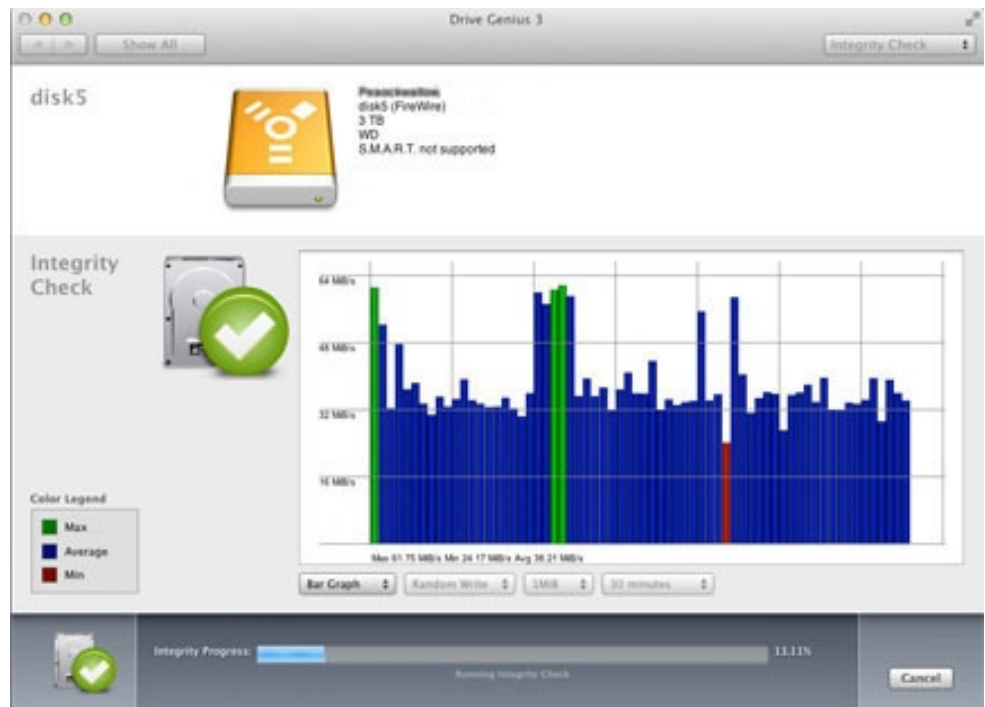
The **Initialize** tool will install a driver, write a partition map (using either Apple Partition Map or GUID Partition Scheme), or create a new volume. To be honest, I don't know why you would need this feature since Apple's Disk Utilities will do the same thing, but if you want it here it is.

The **Repartition** tool lets you create a new partition on the fly-without the need to reformat your drive. You can also hide, expand, shrink, or delete any of your partitions. Except for deleting a partition, all data remains intact on your partitions.

The **DrivePulse** tool runs when your computer is idle. It checks the Physical hard drive health, fragmentation, volume consistency, and whether it is S.M.A.R.T verified for all of your hard drives/volumes. It will alert you if it finds a problem. If you are concerned that it will be using up battery power on your laptop, you can set it to: "Suspend while on battery power".

You can purchase Drive Genius 3 as a download only or as a disc and download. The disc is a bootable DVD. This is very helpful in situations where you only have one bootable drive on your computer. Simply boot to the DVD and proceed with the repairs. You will also have two downloads in your emailed receipt upon purchase. One is the application and the other a full boot DVD image (so you can burn your own bootable DVD). You can also create a boot thumb drive that you can copy the Drive Genius software on to. Thumb drives are handy for the people who want to use Drive Genius on their new laptop Mac that has no DVD drive.

As a side note: For those of you that have hard drives that have crashed beyond the capabilities of Drive Genius to repair, Prosoft Engineering has a Data Rescue center that will try and retrieve the information off your hard drive. Here is their statement: "Whether you have hard drive failure, deleted files and pictures, virus corruption or general data loss, our data recovery specialists have all the know-how to provide the solutions you are looking for." Their web address is: <http://www.thedatarescuecenter.com/>.



This is Drive Genius' "Integrity Check" scanning one of my volumes.

The Skinny

Evaluation: I like that Drive Genius' DrivePulse tool will keep scanning for problems in the background. One day after I finished doing my evening work on the computer, DrivePulse popped up an alert telling me that there was a problem with one of my partitions. I promptly ran Drive Genius' Repair option and the problem went away.

Years ago, Drive Genius was one of the few - if not the only program that you could use to repartition your hard drives on the fly. Now that option comes standard with OS X's Disk Utilities. So this one tool isn't absolutely necessary. But I like that Drive Genius' available tools have increased in number and capability since I started using it back in 2004.

Though some of the tools come standard with Apple's Disk Utilities, the rest don't. Drive Genius has many useful tools and would be a welcomed addition to anyone's hard drive repair tools.

Requires: Mac OS 10.5.3 to 10.7, 512 MB RAM Minimum, Intel® Processor

Company: [Prosoft Engineering](#)

Street Price: \$99.00

MUG price: There is a 25% off Mac User Group discount. SMMUG members - Go to our Members only page to get the promo code.

Competitive upgrade price: There is a \$75 Drive Genius 3 competitive upgrade available. All you need to do is enter the competing product's serial number.

[Available Demo](#)