

What to do when your camera card, flash drive, harddrive or computer has 'eaten' your files.

First rule: At some point, you will lose data [files, pictures etc.] Disasters happen. So you need to take steps to protect against irretrievable loss.

Second rule: The best protection, really, is backing up your data. If you can, have multiple backups. There are online storage entities [such as Dropbox, SugarSync] which will give you a free 2Gb of online storage so you can test the waters. Hard drives to back up to are fairly cheap now, so having at least that backup is a help [only if you have a strategy that backs up at regular intervals].

Third rule: Have some sort of cataloguing program which will allow you to fairly easily find your files/pictures among your backups. I use CDFinder, myself.

Fourth rule: There are file recovery methods that can help in a pinch. FileSalvage will scan and recover the contents of drives, as will Rescue Pro; FilerecoveryPro allows you to 'drill down' within folders on a drive to find a more precise set of items to scan and recover. Of course, these programs can't promise to recover items, but if there's data there, they probably can. All provide free demos to see if a scan will work for you.

I learned all this through an experience I just had the past few days. I use CF cards in my camera and then take the images off them to put in my Aperture program. I usually don't erase the CF cards soon thereafter just in case. But they do get formatted and written over if enough time has passed.

I had a batch of 500 or so pictures in a file folder on a drive. Of them, about 100 were '0' kb in size, so that there was no data

available. Worried that I had lost those images totally [I hadn't found them in my Aperture library on my first review] I was really getting stressed. There were other problems with those, but I won't relate them here. Suffice it to say that I thought I'd lost those 100 -0- kb pictures totally.

I did download and run test scans of the drive using FileSalvage and RescuePro. The former had to search the whole 750G drive and ended up with 12,000 items of the same kind in a long list and structure that made finding the '0' kb ones difficult. I'm sure it'd be fine with one CF card or a flash drive or a smaller disk, but not for me in this instance. So I tried RescuePro. It did better and ended up with a report of images found and their size, but it also didn't have the fine-toothed-comb needed by me. A person at the RescuePro site suggested that I might want to try FileRecovery, so I did a demo.

I wanted to find files within folders on harddrives to narrow the search and recovery. FileRecovery is a sister to Rescuepro and it did just what I wanted it to do, drill down thru the drive's filestructure to scan only a folder of images and not a whole drive. It did this and it came up with all the items in the folder among which were the -0- kb items in the list. You can do a 'view' to see the file to be recovered. It may not work, but at least you can pinpoint your search.

<http://www.lc-tech.com/software/frpromacdetail.html>

Luckily, I remembered that I had CDFinder application on my drive and opened it and ran a search on one of the -0- kb named files [the name is 4885.CR2 but I just searched for 4885, not even noting whether an it was an image or not]. Using CDFinder I came up with loads of items on several backup drives, including the -0-kb ones but also the 4885 original in its full 12mb glory. Whew!

RESOURCES:

RescuePro & FileRecovery: <http://www.lc-tech.com/software/software-recovery.html>

File Salvage: <http://www.subrosasoft.com/OSXSoftware/>

CDFinder: <http://www.cdfinder.de/>

DropBox: <http://www.getdropbox.com>

SugarSync: <http://www.sugarsync.com>