
hard disk failure?

Posted by sukanat - 2007/07/28 00:01

I have a new notebook with a 300GB hard drive. It has Windows XP, and as my son has a game that runs only on Vista, I decided to create a new partition for Vista. I downloaded and used Partition Magic, as I thought it would be safer and easier than using the windows management tool. I also believed it would mean I wouldn't need to worry about backing up my files. However, once I'd run the wizard to create a new partition for a new OS, the computer failed to boot from the hard drive. When I set it up to boot from the CD, it started to install windows but then stopped with the error message that it couldn't find a hard drive. I tried using a windows recovery boot disk, and this could only find a hard drive of 100MB. When I enter the RAID setup it seems to state that the disk is fine. How can I tell if the hard drive is really shot and whether I need a new one or whether the problem is something else?
thanks a lot if anyone can help.

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Re:hard disk failure?

Posted by admin - 2007/07/28 00:14

Hi Suzanne,

Thanks for your post.

RAID is a fairly new technology on home PCs, it's history as something for corporate servers and mainframes means that it can be rather tricky to configure sometimes.

As RAID is not built into most PCs, the Windows CD does not try and detect your RAID hard disk when it boots up, hence not finding the disk. You can solve this by downloading the drivers for your RAID controller onto a floppy disk, then when installing Windows it will say "Press F6 to Install Additional Drivers". Then you'll be able to load the drivers from the disk and the Windows install program should see your RAID hard drives.

As for the problem of your hard disk not booting, if you can get into Partition Magic you may need to make sure the partition is set as "bootable", or re-write the master boot record by booting to the command line and running the "fdisk /mbr" command.

If you'd like a technician to come over and restore the drive for you then please don't hesitate to call or e-mail to arrange an appointment. Our Microsoft Windows Installation Service will cover finding and installing the drivers for your RAID controller.

Kind regards,
Gareth

Post edited by: admin, at: 2007/08/03 19:14

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Re:hard disk failure?

Posted by sukanat - 2007/07/28 04:06

Many thanks for this advice. I will try to fix the problem myself (I have found instructions on how to do this in the computer manual) but if I can't I will certainly call on your services. Do you know whether it is possible to convert the hdds back to two normal disks?, as I was intended to put two different OSs on them anyway, so there doesn't seem much point in having RAID anyway. There is an option to delete in the RAID setup but I'm very wary of selecting it in case it causes further problems.

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Re:hard disk failure?

Posted by admin - 2007/07/28 04:15

Yes, it's definitely possible to get them to run as standard drives again. If you delete the RAID array or reformat the drives as standard disks you'll lose all your data though, so take care.

To get the drives to run as standard disks you may need to open up the computer and move the cables from the RAID controller to the standard SATA/IDE sockets on your motherboard, depending on your RAID controller's model and your computer.

Good luck getting the drives to work! If you'd like to contact us regarding our services for home or business, please don't hesitate to call or e-mail us.

Kind regards,
Gareth
Global Village Networks LLC

Re:hard disk failure?

Posted by sukanat - 2007/07/29 23:32

Many thanks for this advice. I took a chance and deleting the RAID configuration, and now they are working as standard HDDs with no problems, no need to alter anything on the hardware. However, I now have a couple of other problems, first the wireless adapter isn't working, despite installing the drivers and switching it on. Also, my version of Partition Magic doesn't appear to have Boot Magic, I have tried using other Boot Managers but I can't get any of them to work, so I can only boot into Vista, not XP. Partition Magic doesn't work with XP. It also split the hard drive with Vista on into two, and I have no access to the other half of the drive now. After doing all this, my son's game still won't work as NVIDIA haven't made the Vista drivers for the graphics cards yet! My other Partition Manager program doesn't work at all, but I have ordered a CD of Partition Magic that will hopefully have Boot Magic on it that I can install from XP (not sure how I'm going to do that yet). So, altogether the whole thing has been a complete waste of time. I had heard that Paragon were giving away free old copies of Partition Manager, but I can only find free trials on the internet, and they don't actually do any partitioning, I'm loathe to buy a third Partition Manager program. I can't figure out how to use the windows management without deleting everything and starting from scratch, which I might do.

Thanks very much for your help, I now have the computer working again.

Re:hard disk failure?

Posted by gareth - 2007/07/30 18:00

Hi again Suzanne,

Glad we could help you get your computer working again!

In response to your further questions;

Download Free Partition Magic/Boot Magic - to the best of my knowledge Partition Magic has always been a commercial product and never given away free. Any found for free online will be demos or pirated/cracked "warez" copies which are illegal. If there are any old free versions about they probably won't support XP, Vista or NTFS filesystems.
Boot Manager Alternatives - the good news is you already have a pretty good boot manager built into Windows. It can be configured to boot XP or Vista by editing the boot.ini file or using a utility. Our Software Installation service would also cover this configuration if you'd like a qualified technician to do this for you.
Wireless Card - Sounds like this is either a problem with the hardware or the device drivers, I'd need to have a look at the PC to accurately diagnose this one.

Hope this helps. Please call me if you need on-site technical support, or tell your friends about our services.

Kind regards,
Gareth
Global Village Networks

Post edited by: admin, at: 2007/08/03 19:14

Re:hard disk failure?

Posted by sukanat - 2007/08/03 05:03

Thanks a lot for your help. I got a CD of Partition Magic which also had Boot Magic on it. I did pay for the one I downloaded but it didn't have Boot Magic on it. I used it to partition the hard drives, and then I had a problem that the computer wouldn't boot again. I contacted Symantec and they told me to download a copy of a windows 98 boot cd from www.allbootdisks.com. I did this, and used it to delete all my partitions and set them as new active partitions, but now my computer won't do anything at all. Whether I boot from the HDD or CD, I get 'missing Operating System', so I guess I made a big mistake. Unless you can give me some advice on what to do, I think I'll be calling on your services to install windows for me. thanks.

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Re:hard disk failure?

Posted by admin - 2007/08/03 22:21

Hi Suzanne,

Glad to hear you've made some progress!

The "Missing Operating System" error is saying that the disk can't work out where to boot from, you need to make sure your partitions are set as bootable and that the master boot record is intact. As you've repeatedly reformatted and reinstalled and had a variety of results I'd also recommend doing a deep-scan on the disk to make sure there's no problems with the hardware.

Please call me on +1-407-408-9561 if you'd like to schedule an appointment for someone to come over and install Windows/check your hardware, we could schedule something this weekend or next week depending on what would be most convenient for you.

Kind regards,
Gareth Price
Global Village Networks LLC

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Re:hard disk failure?

Posted by sukanat - 2007/08/04 06:27

I managed to figure out what was wrong before this message had even been posted, but didn't feel I could post a follow up until I'd had a reply. It was that the disks hadn't been formatted. I tried repeatedly to format them in DOS with no success, but fortunately the windows boot CD that I'd managed to download allowed access to the drives and I could format them from there. Usually windows formats them before it installs, but this time obviously it couldn't. At the moment things are working just fine but I may still yet need your services if I encounter any more problems. Thanks again for all your help.

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Re:hard disk failure?

Posted by admin - 2007/08/06 00:56

Hi Suzanne,

Great, glad you got it sorted! Sometimes these things just take a while :)

Please keep us in mind if you, your business or anyone you know who's less tech-savvy ever needs computer services.

Kind regards,
Gareth
Global Village Networks LLC

