

Data Recovery from CDs and Other Optical Disks

The rewritable CD, which was once such a novelty and buying too many of them was impossible for any home user is now readily available at throwaway pricing. It is possible to save space anyway on recordable CDs as well since all of them are multi-session disks now. The single force that pushed floppies out of the market was the CD and the unbelievable pricing is an obvious tribute to its incredible popularity.

Data Loss from Recordable and Rewritable CDs

Whenever a medium of data storage becomes very popular, it should be understood that data loss from it is also equally common. The same applies to CDs - both recordable and rewritable ones – since both are widely used by the public in general. The reasons of data loss, how lost data can be recovered, and the ways by which a reliable data recovery service provider can be chosen have been discussed below. It would help to point it out here that these reasons also largely apply to DVDs though there are some media-specific reasons for data loss that would not tally between the two.

Common Reasons

There are a set of common reasons as to why CDs lose their data. Broadly speaking, these can be divided into three groups: data loss through hardware problem, data loss through software problems and data loss through manufacturing defects.

Data Loss through Hardware Problems: Data can be lost from the CD through exposure to natural elements such as fire, dust and sand. Water is not so harmful unless it is very dirty. Strong soaps, rough cloths, and abrasive surfaces can all remove the data from your CD instead of cleaning it. Heat and humidity are also bad for it. A CD can lose its data when the shiny surface on which the data is written gets scratched. One also should not write on that surface. If the hard disk crashes or the write head gets jammed or the computer gets electrocuted or forcibly shut down while a CD is recording, the data will get deleted. Trying to pry out a stuck CD wrongly inserted in the tray is another common way of data loss. Dropping a CD is another way of damaging it.

Data Loss through Software Problems: If the Operating System crashes while a CD is being written, the data will be deleted. CDs are prone to virus infection from an infected system or by downloading infected matter from the net. Trying to record a CD in a drive with a speed mismatch, recording incompatible files, storing more data than the capacity of the CD are all ways of corrupting and losing data. Also, one may accidentally delete a CD or 'blank' it before re-recording or deleting useful data. Storing media files of various formats on the same disk can also be damaging.

Manufacturing Defects: As mass production increases to meet the demand of a growing market, quality control is often going for a toss when it comes to CDs – both recordable and re-recordable. A bad quality CD, especially in the re-recordable format, will not last as long as it is supposed to. Files will get easily corrupted in it and more so if they happen to be downloads, programme files or large media files.

How to Recover Data

Data lost from a recordable or re-recordable CD can be recovered in three ways.

One can try out a recovery software. These are usually quite cheap DIY software that one can download from the internet and run on the computer to recover data from the disk.

If the data is very precious or of a sensitive nature, it is better to contact a professional data recovery company. This will mean extra charges, but also more security in every sense of the word.

One may try and rebuild the data from various sources till one gets it all back again. In that case, there has to be the requisite backup in the first place.

Features of Good DIY Software

Good DIY software would have the following features:

It should be easy to download and operate. No point buying it if it's full of jargon.

It should not delete any programmes while downloading.

There would be easy ways of payment.

There should be a physical office with a helpline in case you get stuck.

About the Author

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