



Program Review

DiskInternals Uneraser

by Paul Witheridge

DiskInternals Uneraser

<http://www.diskinternals.com>

1.46 MB Download

\$34.95

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<http://www.diskinternals.com/support.shtml>

System Requirements

Any Intel-compatible platform running Windows 9x/ME/NT4.0/2000/XP/2003. At least 16 MB of RAM, a mouse, and enough disk space for recovered files. The usual administrative privileges are required to run Uneraser under WinNT/2000/XP/2003.

Using the Program

The program installs easily just like any other Windows program and features a standard Windows Explorer interface with drag and drop support. It supports all the standard file systems of the operating systems listed above: FAT12, FAT16, FAT32, NTFS (NT 4), NTFS5 (2000, XP) as well as the hidden file systems: Hidden FAT12, Hidden FAT16, Hidden FAT32, Hidden NTFS. It can access any hard disk partitions under any OS. (It is even possible to recover files on NTFS under Win9x!) However, I'm sure there is a reason why it does not provide network access for file searching, only for file recovery.

Happily, it has long filename support (FAT12, FAT16, FAT32) and it can also undelete folders with subfolders.

As just mentioned, due to the importance of avoiding the over-writing of other deleted files, recovered files can be saved on any disks (including network) visible to the host operating system.

DiskInternals claims that Uneraser can undelete files and folders deleted from the Recycle Bin; files deleted by-passing the Recycle Bin (for example when using [Shift]+[Delete]); common folders such as My Documents, My Pictures and other; photos deleted from digital cameras; files and folders deleted from the com-

mand line; files after virus or worm attack; and even damaged disks (disks with bad sectors). Uneraser will search various storage media including: hard Drives, digital cameras, floppy disks, Zip Disks, Jaz Disks, drive images (FAT/NTFS), Sony Memory Sticks, Compact Flash cards, Smart Media Cards, Secure Digital Cards and USB disks. I would have loved to test it on my wife's SD card, but unfortunately the SD card reader is unaccessible from the host machine. A friend had a Compact Flash card on which he had lost some photos and I welcomed the opportunity to try to recover them with a borrowed CF reader. Sadly, DI Uneraser could see only the folder, but none of its contents.

By default, DI Uneraser offers a Wizard to guide your search. Let me tell you, the Wizard is great! It's very easy to use and very user-friendly, allowing you to focus the search both where and for what. There are Help buttons at every step as well, in case you need any clarification. The only glitch I found was that the Help button for the 'Options' page at the last step before the Wizard launches a search is non-functional. But if you use the Help button *on* that last step, it explains the options. A minor item!

I searched for Lotus workbook files on my hard drive which I was sure were among the lost and I found two (Jan /03, Feb /04) with Wizard. It then recovered two copies of each. Unfortunately, none could be opened after restoring. Strangely, when I did the same search without using the Wizard -- neither could even be found! So be sure to ask the Wizard!

The first question I had when viewing the recovered files was "why do several file variants appear"? DiskInternals Uneraser had the answer: Due to some peculiarities of Windows 2000/XP and FAT32, it is impossible to find the 100% correct location of a deleted file. Only several most probable file variants can be suggested. I must also note here that one .WAV file I recovered turned out to be a .GIF file when I attempted to open it following recovery!

I tried other searches with varying success, understanding that no file recovery tool can guarantee success every time due to the very nature of the process. Briefly, deleting a file merely causes it to be "delisted" in the system -- commonly by destroying the first character in the filename. This then makes the space it occupies on your disk available to be overwritten by a new file. It's much like playing roulette as to when that may happen, so the sooner you look for a deleted file, the better are your chances that no part of it has yet been over-written. But for ease and simplicity of use, it's hard to beat this utility. If you can use the 'Find' or 'Search' tools in Windows,

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you'll have no trouble finding and unerasing files with DiskInternals Uneraser. If a file is still recoverable, a few clicks will do it. Unfortunately, the probability of success decreases with (a) the activity of the partition, (b) the time since deleting the file and (c) the size of the file.

Another feature I found is Uneraser's ability to create image files. These are single file captures of an entire drive or partition or portion thereof (eg just the boot sector). Not only is this the only way to capture a boot sector (i.e. an altered or damaged one), but it's the only way to capture a copy of a drive or partition's "FREE" space which may or may not be occupied by deleted files. When a highly critical file recovery operation is required, saving an image copy first is the best approach lest something go awry.

Some things I learned when creating an image: the file created is larger than the entire partition imaged, so you will require a destination with sufficient free space to receive it. You cannot store the image of a 250MB partition on another 250MB partition. Therefore, just as for file recovery, you are allowed access to networked drives for the destination even though not for the source.

Also, plan on waiting a while since it's not a fast operation. On my old P-200, imaging a 250MB partition took exactly 100 minutes. And here I would suggest that the author consider creating a more user-friendly interface. There is no immediate on-screen confirmation that the imaging is taking place -- no hourglass or other notification. There is a blue progress bar which is not evident until after some time and moves so slowly as to be easily overlooked. Much better would be a dialogue box with a % completed indicator beginning at zero. That way, you would at least know that the process has started.

One other item caught my attention. On startup, I would always see an error message in the status bar at the bottom. I got a very prompt reply from Tech Support advising that this resulted from my empty floppy drive which was always included in the opening drive list scan. Installing a diskette solved that. And TS advised that this would be addressed in a future version.

So! DI Uneraser is simple to use, but it cannot perform the impossible. What *is* possible to be recovered is made very easy to do with this program, however.

RECYCLE SCUG

Share SCUG Report with your friends, co-workers and also new computer users. Tell them about us and invite them out to a meeting.

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Editor's Note: Fred took a poll at a Digital SIG meeting last year to see who has what kind of cameras. From this Fred separated the members into groups pertaining to the various camera types. Armed with this information, Fred has now begun his in-house (at his own home) meeting with members having the same brand of digital cameras. This inaugural Digital Photography meeting was held on January 9th. Cannon seemed to be the most popular camera amongst SCUG members so it was the Cannon shooters who had the first meeting. These meetings are designed to fine tune people's aspects of their particular cameras and to help members become aware of the many settings and uses therein. It is a fabulous idea, one that will certainly be a hit. Thanks again Fred for the excellent job with our Digital Photography Interest Group.

Sunday Afternoon Report.

Sharing Information about Canon Cameras on a Sunday afternoon at 152 Dundas Street at 2 PM.

On Sunday Afternoon January 9, 2005 Five Canon owners enjoyed a sharing of information and looking at the many possibilities which are available in these digital cameras. We looked at the instruction book for a Canon A 75 camera and discussed many of the features, which are not well known. Examples are auto rotation of a photo taken vertical to horizontal for TV viewing. A fireworks setting and special scene settings where also discovered. The use of digital zoom in combination with the optical zoom and the use of flash outdoors were talked about.



The group found the session very worth while and recommends it to the next group. We will have a group for Sony and Nikon users and one for Olympus and Fuji users in February.

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