

Data Loss Disasters, Clever Recoveries From Kroll Ontrack in 2011

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Kroll Ontrack, a longtime provider of data recovery products and services, has compiled a list of its top 10 data loss disasters and seemingly miraculous recoveries every year since 2004. It's always interesting reading. The Minneapolis-based company uses hundreds of proprietary tools and techniques to help businesses and consumers recover lost or corrupted data from all types of operating systems, devices and storage media. From human error to natural disaster, this annual list of real data loss situations compiled by Ontrack Data Recovery engineers from more than 30 Kroll Ontrack offices around the globe, reveals data loss is often inevitable, but not necessarily permanent. Hopefully, you won't see yourself in any of these stories.

Triple Whammy

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When a lightning strike caused a fire that sent a famous Caribbean island home up in smoke, the computer servers were burned and then doused with water by the fire squad. The media then corroded while the building sat idle until it was safe to re-enter. In the end, the triple whammy of a lightning strike, fire and water damage was overcome in the Ontrack Data Recovery cleanroom.



It's a Doggy-Eat-Dog World

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A man encouraged his girlfriend to back up her photo library, which contained thousands of high-resolution photos from her photo studio. She diligently moved the data from her laptop to an external hard drive, and unfortunately that became the only good copy. A friend then pulled into the driveway and the couple went out to meet her, but not before the hyper, happy family dog heard someone at the door and came tearing out from underneath the table where the drive was sitting. The drive went crashing to the floor, damaging the only good copy of this data. Kroll was able to recover all the data from the damaged drive.



A Little Piece of History

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A freelance photographer happened to be in the midst of the recent London economic riots. Some rioters saw they were being filmed and opted to smash the camera in order to destroy the potentially incriminating evidence. No worries—Kroll Ontrack was able to recover all the data, and the video footage was supplied to the police.



In the Safe, Not on the Safe

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To avoid arriving late to a business meeting, an IT person opted to put a tape drive on top of the waterproof safe instead of inside it. Within an hour of doing so, the city was struck by a powerful earthquake and the tape was knocked to the ground. Then, mud, water and sand engulfed the premises. The tape looked unrecoverable, but Kroll's tape recovery people were able to recover 100 percent of the data, which included one year of TV and Web animations.



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Smoking Kills

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A newly hired security guard was doing his first evening security check in a chemical ingredients warehouse. While he was informed that smoking was forbidden, he pondered who could possibly spot him enjoying a cigarette after company hours. After it was lit, the fire alarm sounded and prompted the anti-fire sprinkler system. All the electronic equipment, including 44 desktops and two servers, were flooded. While most of the equipment was damaged beyond repair, Kroll was able to recover the data stored on the desktops and servers.



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Sunken Business Deal

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Two businessmen met in a pub over a beer to discuss their future deal. The server accidentally knocked over one of the glasses she was delivering, soaking the laptop, which contained the business plans. A paper towel was not enough to save the laptop and its important deal files. The data was eventually recovered, however.



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End-of-Month Disaster

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A corporate accounting department stayed late to reconcile the books for the month. While the team was rejuvenating on a coffee break, a power outage occurred. All the computers shut down, including the financial server. Luckily, the department's computers were connected to an uninterruptible power supply. However, the continual brewing of their cups of java drained the UPS battery, resulting in a crashed server. The data was eventually recovered, however.



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Magnetic Attraction

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A laptop was set down on a desk near some rare earth magnets. The magnets came into contact with the laptop, and when the user went to turn on the machine, it did not boot up all the way and there was a clicking noise. While there was physical damage to the platters, proprietary techniques overcame the damage and the data was recovered.



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Bad Image

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An actress deleted her entire portfolio, including her model card samples and recent pictures, by accidentally selecting the wrong externally attached USB drive using the MAC disk utility program. No matter—Kroll Ontrack was able to recover her image entirely.



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