

review by Pete Burkindine

4.5 Stars - 1 Star Poor, 5 Stars Excellent

Title: DiskWarrior
Version: 1.0.2
Developer: Alsoft, Inc.

Price: \$69.95

Contact Info: <http://www.alsoft.com/>

Genre: Directory Repair Utility

Requirements: 68020 processor or later. Mac OS 7.1 or later. 16 MB RAM (varies by directory size). DiskWarrior supports SCSI, IDE, and USB devices and is compatible with any storage medium formatted as a Macintosh disk.

review

If your Mac disk is malfunctioning, you have a number of options. First you can rebuild your desktop (via command-option or freeware such as TechTool Lite) and then you can run Apple's free Disk First Aid. Should those fail, you may try out Symantec's Norton Utilities or Micromat's TechTool Pro. As a last resort, software such as Abbott Systems' CanOpener can try to salvage parts of documents before you wipe the disk and start over.

So why in the heck do we need another disk utility?

A better question might be: why in the heck did I still lose that spreadsheet? Why in the heck did I still have to format that disk? Why? It's because DFA, Norton Utilities and TTP all work in essentially the same way. They look at

what's on the disk now, and they decide what's wrong, and they try to replace it with what ought to be there.

DiskWarrior approaches disk repair from a completely different perspective. It doesn't attempt to fix the wide range of problems that Norton is capable of — it cares only for your disk's directory. In fact, it doesn't much care for your current directory, because its sole job is to replace it with an optimized (read: new, cleaner, faster) version. As preventative maintenance, this will go a long way towards staving off more serious problems (unless you attack your disk with a bottle of vinegar and a Swiss army knife). In emergency mode, this software can recover files and folders no other utility will even acknowledge as being present on the disk.

Sounds great. Does it work?

[Look at DiskWarrior](#)

DiskWarrior sports the same extremely easy to use, almost no input required interface that users of Alsoft's PlusMaker and PlusOptimizer are familiar with. If there's one thing Alsoft does right, and there are several, it's interface design. Every product they make is easy to use, attractive and virtually hands-off. Norton comes close, but you just can't beat clicking two buttons throughout the entire process. It also comes with an exhaustive and well-written manual, which is nice but, for most people, completely unnecessary.

ook just above. That's it. You choose your drive, hit rebuild, and come back in a couple of minutes to hit one more button. It goes through all the steps (processing, discarding and rebuilding the current directory, etc.) entirely on its own. You can hit the stop button, but that'd be silly.

When DiskWarrior finishes making the new directory, it allows you to look at both directories "live" in read-only mode before it trashes the old one. This allows you to look for missing icons or files, which ensures total safety. DiskWarrior has so many safeguards built in that you would have to wrench open your machine and beat on it with your monitor to do damage.

hat's really all there is to it. You run DiskWarrior, it fixes your directory. You go about your business. This won't save every file every time, but when used in preventative mode, it can ensure the safety of your data more than you otherwise could, and with important data, every assurance you have is good.

Great. DiskWarrior can help me keep my data where it should be. However, that's not all DiskWarrior can do. No no, my friend. The key word this month is "optimization." You probably don't realize it, but your disk's directory is a mess. It just gets that way over time. What does a messy directory mean to you? Slower access times, slower startups, slower everything. When you access a file, the directory tells your software where the data is. If your directory is as messy as a living room after Christmas morning, you're going to be waiting a little while.

When DiskWarrior makes a brand-new, optimized directory, you will notice that things happen faster. That's not just hype, you will.

I ran several tests on a PowerMac G3/300 running Mac OS 8.5.1. I have three HFS+ partitions and one standard HFS partition on my SCSI disk and a single standard HFS partition on my ATA (IDE) disk. I first tested startup time, averaged over five restarts, before and after DiskWarrior.

Startup Time

Before DiskWarrior: 1:20
After DiskWarrior: 1:00

20 seconds may not sound like much, but trust me when I say that it's a difference you can feel. DiskWarrior seems to make up a great deal of time right after the chime and before the Happy Mac shows up. But perhaps that is not impressive enough. Here is a more revealing test.

Time to Run Disk First Aid's "Verify" Function on All Five Partitions

Before DiskWarrior: 1:30
After DiskWarrior: 0:36

This significant decrease in time means that your files and folders will be accessed faster, every time. You'll feel the change when opening folders in the Finder or text files within ClarisWorks. Again, it may seem like only a little bump in speed, but every second counts. How much is your time worth to you?

he Bad Stuff

Are there any caveats? Unfortunately, yes.

First, the price: at \$69.95, it's only \$30 less than the entire Norton Utilities suite. What it does it does extremely well, but it only does one thing. If you need a comprehensive solution to your disk woes, and you have limited funds, DiskWarrior isn't it. However, if you already have one or two suites of tools and need something to supplement your arsenal, or just to eke a little more speed out of your disk, DiskWarrior is a great choice.

Second, it's not entirely perfect. During my tests, it made errors with icons twice. Both times an icon from a folder that was deleted weeks ago was placed on another folder which had no special icon attached to it. It's a very minor thing which caused no trouble or harm, but it's still a glitch.

he Big Picture

DiskWarrior is a great product with no major flaws. It does what it does quickly, easily, and with a minimum of fuss. The results are noticeable and

overwhelmingly positive. In fact, it's the only disk utility I'm aware of that has never gotten negative press on MacFixIt at <http://www.macfixit.com/> . Here is just one of the many positive emails that Alsoft has received:

Fwd: Disk Warrior is the best!

I just purchased disk Warrior as a last ditch attempt to revive my disk before sending it in for expensive disk recovery. The files on the disk were the most important I have - the current accounting info of my business - so I thought I was at the mercy of disk recovery company's high prices. However, much to my delight and surprise, ten minutes after receiving your software loading it and running it the disk and all its valuable files were up and running perfectly!

Thank you for the great software at a reasonable price. I have referred your company's products to all my friends.

The only reason this product did not receive a full five stars is because, darn it, it's just a bit too expensive. Might I suggest \$49.95 to the fine folks at Alsoft? That aside, the product's superior interface, innovative and quality features, and results guarantee that you could do worse than to spend money on it.

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