

Disk First Aid - Darren Edwards

You can't really cover a disk aid feature with out including Apple's own Disk First Aid [DFA]. There are those who spend their money on the newest and most powerful tools for their system tune ups and why not? But for Joe public, fast and simple is not always best. This is where DFA fills the gap:

- No mounting from external drives DFA will verify and repair from the boot up disk
- No outlay of cash, DFA is FREE from Apple.
- Supports the HFS+ extended format
- Fast scanning and verification before you repair giving you the choice to leave your drive untouched
- Works on a little LC4/80 right upto the 'Bondi Blue' G3's and nearly any MacOS system folder in between.

I have heard of a few minor glitches in various versions of DFA over the years but none are remotely dramatic [mostly just missing icons until a reboot takes place]. If you could love an application then DFA would be a contender. Ok, ok there's none of the scanning and fragmenting skills of Norton present, neither are there powerful system diagnostic tools present from TechTool. It could win buy being a simple, low memory and user friendly piece of software.

Not every one has a zip drive but it is the simple and inexpensive part of my disk recover and monthly tune-up routines. I pack my zip full of tools that will hopefully recover any problem. I've also made a CD and of course the old trusty floppy back-up folder, for when the going gets tough. Disk First Aid is one programme that I can't live without!

At the end of the month I scan my drives with Disk First Aid, Norton Utilities, Norton Anti Virus and finally DFA again then on restart I rebuild my desktop folder. All this in an hour and forty five minutes [if there's no problems].

ince Apple's release of MacOS 8.5.1 my system and fellow Mac friends have reported far less errors. I am pleased with Apple's responsible attitude to stopping system memory leakage, the switch to HFS+ and making the system finder more stable.

My wish list baring in mind that DFA is to stay **FREE** and simple to use:

- Still not 100% stable but then again what is?
- Simple defragment tools with an optimiser
- Handle Volume Bit Maps/B-trees better

That's all I propose. You can't do much more without making the utility memory intensive and sluggish. The whole concept of DFA is to keep things fast and simple.

Conclusion

You never know what's happening to your system as you open and close programmes going about your general day to day work. A new Extension could be causing problems or an application slowly becomes more erratic. DFA will repair none of these, but good house keeping of your drives and system will prevent most [but not all] of the commonest problems we Mac users encounter.

DFA is NOT the beginning and end it's just a simple and growing tool in the first defence against the system failure war. Apple knows it can't produce a better solution than a third party software vendor can, at a time when they need to concentrate on core issue such as MHz, chips, expansion, market share, compatibility, reliability to name a few.

isk First Aid is just that, first aid until the emergency unit arrives be they Norton, TechTool, MacMedic, George Clooney or DiskWarrior. There will always be a time and place for these more defensive and scrutinising packages, when things are truly on the fan these tools may save your skin, but good house maintenance should remain DFA.

Apple is very supportive of its OS and software/hardware. If you find a problem there are many feedback points you can let Apple know about the difficulties you are experiencing on the Internet. 9/10 times you'll find the patch or update already on their site awaiting your download!


Apple has a large beta testing division and can spot problems very quickly. There will always be the occasional loophole, hey, not even Apple are perfect!

Apple Sites to help you solve your woes:

www.apple.com/support
Apple's main support pages

<http://support.info.apple.com/support/imac/index.html>
iMac help and tech issues

<http://til.info.apple.com>
Tech info archives and updates

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