

Advice from Middle Aged Female Tech  
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I have been in the industry with my own company since 1994. The entire time I have worked in this field there have been very few times any two techs ever agree completely. The advice I give here is based on my experiences, testing, and what I know works.

Today's Subject: Free Tools to Recover Deleted Files

There is almost nothing worse than losing important files when you experience a finger fumble, brain freeze, or computer crash. But never fear, there are tools that can help you recover those lost files, and some of the best ones are free...

### How To Recover Deleted Files - For Free

So you lost an important file. If you simply deleted the wrong file, you can usually get it back by opening the Recycle Bin (on Windows) and restoring it. On a Mac, you'll look in the Trash Bin. Linux users, check the Trash folder. The happy secret here is that in most cases, deleted files really aren't gone at all. They're just moved into the Recycle/Trash bucket, and can be restored to their original folders with a few clicks. But, as we all know, sometimes they are not in the Trash Bin (because \*speaking of myself here\* I held down the shift key while deleting to avoid the trash bin) and they can't be recovered without a little software help.

Obviously, all of these tools are most useful if you install them BEFORE you lose the data, because downloading a file can possibly overwrite the very file(s) you want to recover. I recommend that you check out a few and download them to a flash drive or other portable storage, so you'll be ready in case you do need to recover lost files.

### Piriform's Recuva (pronounced like "recover" with a Brooklyn accent)

(<http://www.piriform.com/recuva>) will help you to find files and images on your Windows computer that were deleted by human error, including those deleted from your digital camera memory card or MP3 player. Recuva can also restore files deleted from the recycle bin or those that were deleted by a bug, virus or crash. This is a free Windows application that includes a support forum and because it is a freebie, Piriform would appreciate a small donation if you like their software. Recuva comes from the same people that developed the popular CCleaner, so the reputation is rock solid.



**PhotoRec** (<http://www.cgsecurity.org/wiki/PhotoRec>) is a free undelete utility for **Windows, Linux and Mac OS X**. Despite the name, it can recover almost 400 different file formats (not just photos) including ZIP, Office (Word/Excel/Powerpoint), PDF, HTML, TXT, and JPEG. Photorec can recover files from a variety of media, including hard drives, CD/DVDs, digital camera memory cards, and USB flash drives. It can also be used with portable devices (including the iPod) and many digital cameras. Photorec doesn't even require that the drive be partitioned, formatted or mounted with a drive letter.

**Recover Files 2.1** (<http://www.undeleteunerase.com/>) is a free professional software tool that allows you to recover data removed from your hard drive, recycle bin, portable devices or even a compact flash drive. This Windows-based utility is compatible with Windows 95/98/Me/NT/2000/XP/2003/Vista/Win7 and will recover lost files from all NTFS and FAT partitions with a simple interface. The award winning software has recently been updated to repair some bugs and added 11 languages. Register on their site before downloading.

Losing a file due to an accidental click or keystroke is bad enough. But losing your entire hard drive to a hardware failure, virus, flood or fire can be devastating. And no simple undelete utility will fix that. But backing up your hard drive will help in both the "Oops, I deleted a file" problem as well as the "Oh no... my hard drive died!" scenario. Always back up, use another hard drive, or a usb hard drive, cloud backup, flash drive – but that is for another article.

### More Data Recovery Tools

Another popular free file recovery tool for Windows is **Restoration** ([http://download.cnet.com/Restoration/3000-2094\\_4-10322950.html](http://download.cnet.com/Restoration/3000-2094_4-10322950.html)). This program will find just about everything you've ever deleted from your PC, including files deleted from the DOS prompt. When the program starts, choose a source drive, then click the "Search Deleted Files" button. If you have a file on your hard drive with the same name, restore the file to a different folder, or flash disk so that your existing file is not wiped out. Restoration can also permanently delete files, making it almost impossible to restore or undelete them. Restoration has a no-frills user interface, but it's easy to use and does a good job.

One unique feature of Restoration is that you don't have to install it before running. This is a good thing, because installing a program will write to the disk from which you're trying to restore your deleted files, and this could possibly trample the very data you want to recover. I recommend that you download Restoration to a USB flash drive, then just double-click the .EXE file, and the program will open. Note that on Vista or Windows 7, you might see a message that you need administrator privileges to run Restoration. The fix is simple -- just right-click on the .EXE file and choose "RUN AS ADMINISTRATOR".

**FreeUndelete** (<http://www.officerecovery.com/freeundelete/>) has no charge for personal usage, although they charge for businesses. The program is spyware and adware free, works on Windows XP, Vista, Windows 7, and can restore files from your Recycle Bin or NTFS, FAT32 or FAT16 hard drives. Once recovered, they will be saved in a new user-selected location to prevent overwriting files.

There are also free tools for other types of data disasters. **Advanced PSD Repair** (APSR) (<http://www.datanumen.com/apsr/>) is handy for recovering Photoshop PSD and PDD files and works with all versions.

And if you work with external media, **Recovery Toolbox for CD Free** (<http://www.recoverytoolbox.com/cd.html>) can recover data from damaged or corrupted CD, DVD, HD-DVD and Blu-ray discs. The same company also makes a variety of other data recovery tools,

including Recovery Toolbox for Outlook, Outlook Express, Word, Excel, Zip and other applications to recover damaged or deleted data. They're not free, but you can get a free trial to see if it'll do the job.

For Mac users, **Data Rescue** ([http://www.prosofteng.com/products/data\\_rescue.php](http://www.prosofteng.com/products/data_rescue.php)) is supposed to be very good, but not free.

I am always about saving money and not spending it on things you don't need to

Remember ANY questions, email me at: **Montgomery@Hollyecho.com**. If possible, I will include the answer to your questions in my next article.