Rapid Drive Tester (RDT) Software

This free DOS-based software can be used to test hard drives for presence of read instabilities. It can also deactivate the Master Boot Record (MBR) in order to stop a drive from being mounted by any operating system (because mounting an unstable drive can cause further degradation and permanent data loss). Unlike almost all other software tools, this utility works directly through the ATA controller rather than through the BIOS/OS, which allows for increased operational stability and more accurate identification of hard drive read instabilities.

RDT should work on 2011+ Macs and on all PCs.

Installation Instructions

The archive should be extracted and the .bin image file should be restored sector by sector to a bootable USB stick using a software tool, or command line in OS X. The USB stick should then become FreeDOS bootable and the RDT utility should start on its own right after your Mac/PC boots up from it. Please keep in mind that not all USB sticks are DOS bootable, so if you get any boot related errors then try using another USB stick.

Using RDT

After entering the software, you should select the index of the drive you would like to work with. The current release will only list one drive in the system if the ATA controller is set to AHCI mode. ATA controllers in IDE mode are fully supported, i.e. the utility will list all drives in the system, however in that case RDT must work in PIO mode, which will be very slow. AHCI is recommended wherever possible!

After selecting your drive, you only need to press "m" to begin testing it. At any point during the test, you can press Spacebar to jump forward by about 1% of the drive's capacity. When you'd like to stop testing, you can press Escape and see the summarized results.

The appropriate length of the test depends on the condition of the drive. <u>As soon as a drive starts showing any sign of instabilities, it has a limited amount of time before it will crash completely, so accessing it may cause further degradation!</u> Generally speaking, if the data is valuable and you start to see anything other than green blocks then the test should be stopped and the data should be recovered with a tool that can handle read instabilities appropriately.

Deactivating MBR

After a successful run of the media test, you can press 'D' to Deactivate the MBR. A file called MBRlog.bin is created on the bootable USB stick where a backup of every MBR is saved just prior to any modification, whether it's activation or deactivation. The backup MBRs are stored in order, so the first modified MBR will be saved to the first sector of this file, second modified MBR will be saved to the second sector, and so on.

Miscellaneous

Attention: We provide absolutely no technical support for this free program! It is provided AS IS and your use of it is exclusively AT YOUR OWN RISK! The author offers no warranties or guarantees, express or implied, about any aspect of this program. The author is not responsible for any damage that may arise from the use of this program.

If you find any bugs, you can report them to rdt@deepspar.com.

If you are interested in learning about data recovery, you can have a look at our 2 hour technical presentation which serves as an introduction to this field:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9Ku8p13aDdOX5Axujybz5KOq58DUxn8Y