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## The top 10 data loss disasters of the year?

By: Sandra Rossi (23 Nov 2006)

Some disaster stories about data loss are more colourful than others but here are some of the best for 2006.

Compiled from a global poll undertaken by data recovery services company Ontrack Data Recovery, it is a top 10 list of the more memorable disasters.

10. Helicopter Hi-jinks - Employees of a global telecommunications company dropped a laptop computer while working from a helicopter in Monaco.

Incredibly, the files were retrieved and sent through an FTP server for a meeting in Hong Kong the very next day.

9. Wash the Data Away - On a flight from London to Warsaw, a passenger packed his laptop and toiletries in the same bag.

Unfortunately, his shampoo leaked and flooded everything in the bag, including the laptop, causing the hard drive to fail.

8. Not a Jolly Occasion - British comedian Dom Joly, presenter and co-creator of Trigger Happy TV, dropped his laptop, damaging a hard drive that held five thousand photos, six thousand songs, half a book he was writing and all of his old newspaper columns.

Joly is a columnist who resides in Britain, but has ties to Canada: he visits every summer and spends quality vacation time in the Muskokas, north of Toronto. His Wet 'n wild in Canada column is worth a read.

7. Rescuing the Research - A leading UK research university suffered a catastrophic data loss after a fire broke out in the computer science department on a weekend morning, damaging computer equipment with smoke and water from the fire department's efforts.

Despite the fire, 30 computers were rescued and more than a terabyte of data recovered.

6. Beware of Bananas - A customer left an old banana on the top of his external hard drive which proceeded to seep its contents into the drive, ruining the circuitry. The drive would no longer run, but the circuit board was eventually repaired.

The banana wasn't so fortunate.

5. Hard Drive Speed Bump - It happens every year, but people continue to leave computers and hard drives in the path of moving vehicles. This year alone, Ontrack recovered from a laptop that was run over by a "people mover" at the airport, and several external hard drives stuffed in a backpack that was backed over by a truck.

4. Tenth Time's the Charm - A man reformatted his hard drive not once, not twice, but ten times before he realized there was some valuable information he needed recovered.

3. Finding Nemo - A customer returned from the vacation of a lifetime in Barbados to discover that he couldn't access any of the snorkeling photos he took on his new "waterproof" digital camera. It seems the camera wasn't as waterproof as advertised.

2. Squeaky Drive Gets the Grease - A university professor heard a squeaking noise from the drive of his new

desktop computer. To solve the annoying problem, he opened the case and sprayed the inside of the drive with WD-40. Although successful in stopping the drive from squeaking, his actions also prevented the drive from booting up.

And finally, the number one most remarkable data disaster of 2006...

1. Sock it to Me - Although the circumstances of the original data loss were unremarkable, the problem was intensified when the customer shipped his drive to Ontrack in a pair of dirty socks. The old socks didn't provide the necessary protection during shipping and the resulting damage made the recovery more challenging than normal. Next time, he'll stick with bubble wrap. A rather stinky affair indeed.

Do you have data loss disaster stories of your own? Share them with our Editor,  
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