

# Re: Born this Day (Lord Willing) The Crash Cart Project

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- *From:* "Tod Merley" <[todbot88@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:todbot88@xxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Wed, 23 Aug 2006 12:45:09 -0700
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On 8/23/06, David Desscan <[ddesscan@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:ddesscan@xxxxxxxxxx)> wrote:

A very good idea. I think the first thing to is to search for existing tools. This is surely the first thing you thought of ;-). We don't have to reinvent the wheel but to improve or add new features or even writing new applications from scratch. I like the idea of something like a Swiss Army Knife. We have very handy Swiss Army knives here and some of them come with a lot of tools which can be useful in whatever situation. Anyway whatever the name you give it should serve its purpose. Well for bad HW, I am thinking of a Linux embedded diagnostic board. What about if the first sector of a HDD is damaged. Is it possible to make the read/write heads start reading from another position on the disk? This might be possible with Assembly language programming. There are a lot of nifty tool like that which can be part of this recovery set. I think we have a lot of data recovery tools out there.

<http://crashrecovery.org/>

[http://www.microlite.com/News and Events/pressfallcomdex99/pressfallcomdex99.htm](http://www.microlite.com/News_and_Events/pressfallcomdex99/pressfallcomdex99.htm)

[http://www.sophisticated.com/products/kick-off/kick-off\\_lin.html](http://www.sophisticated.com/products/kick-off/kick-off_lin.html)

(hardware)

<http://freshmeat.net/projects/crk/> (refer to crash recovery)

[http://www.freedownloadcenter.com/Utilities/Disk Maintenance and Repair Utilities/SOS Crash Recovery](http://www.freedownloadcenter.com/Utilities/Disk_Maintenance_and_Repair_Utilities/SOS_Crash_Recovery)

(first thing I'll do is backup my user and configuration data)

<http://www.softplatz.com/freeware/data-recovery/>

What about putting autonomic computing features in Linux e.g. would be Nitix

<http://www.nitix.com/technologies/autonomic.php>

Ok the list could grow longer and longer but I like the idea and am willing to help.

Good Luck Tod

David

Re: Born this Day (Lord Willing) The Crash Cart Project

On 8/23/06, Tod Merley <todbot88@xxxxxxxx> wrote:

>

Hi All!

I would like to start a project (OK, perhaps there is already one ongoing, if so, I would like to know about it) dedicated to recovery from a system crash (broken X, bad HW, anything making the machine non-functional). I am thinking of first a set of applications which gather information about the running system (or what one should look like when it is running)(HW list, SW list, Boot sector copy, config files, critical files md5s, results of lspci, lsmode, "normal" log files (/var/log) etc.... Then a set of applications designed to go in (not booting from the crippled system) and gather the same sorts of information for comparison and understanding the problem now crippling the computer in the shop. And then a set of applications which fix, flag, or tell the owner the bad news determined about the problem computer.

Perhaps the process could make for the developers a standard "Crash Cart Packet" consisting of parts of the logs and command results (maybe an X-packet, Kernel-packet, Audio-packet, etc).

Well, that is it. Just an idea.

I really do not know how to start or be part of such a thing. I guess I will follow those before me and send an e-mail.

If interested in the motivation – read on:

Last night I wrote an e-mail to a gentleman who lost some computers. He thought it might be FC5 (He was doing a fresh install or upgrade).

I have seen several on the lists needing crash help.

I also responded to another gentleman who was experiencing an "updated" Xorg which broke (no GUI!!). I encouraged him to copy some of the basic log files and help us all heal from our very human tendency to break things.

Today I woke up, pressed the on button on my computer, got a cup of coffee, and came back to an ncurses error screen partially obscured by an exit to a prompt. My silly old video card already has some irritations with X/Dapper (hash on the screen after monitor has put itself to sleep) so my prompt was without cursor and the screen was changing colors as I went (I think part of the ncurses applet was still running somehow along with the shell).

I thought I had swallowed a bug!

However when Puppy and then Dapper Live booted – xorg.conf the same but the Xorg binary of very recent date – I remembered the problems I

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commented on and replaced my Xorg from the live CD and was happy.

Please let me know if there is interest!

Thanks!

Tod

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Hi David!

I did not think of what others had done "first thing". I think I simply saw my heart had made a decision.

I did look a bit at what other's had done and yes there are some possible "pieces" there. I believe I am building a system.

Your embedded idea is cool. I do note that Grub does have a fallback option where if boot fails from one place it can use the fallback choice, and BIOS already gives boot several options which could be made "hot". Still, if the MBR is bad, or if the CPU or main Kernel are bad it would take a separate device to have the brains to know how to phone home or go to the haven.

How are your scripting skills? My first idea (little project) is to make a simple script which copies the critical log files from /var/log (after seeing if they will fit on the reception media chosen and making decisions about how to handle the situation if they are not). I am a beginner in scripting. Still, I will start tonight.

Gotta go to work now. I will type to you later.

Good Building!

Tod

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