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Hard Drive Imaging Product Review: DeepSpar, Atola and ddrescue

DeepSpar Disk Imager vs Atola Imager vs GNU ddrescue

DeepSpar Challenges:

- traditionally challenging to find a compatible system board, now includes a PCI-E1xATA controller
- no way to remotely monitor a running system

Atola Challenges:

- not very flexible for playing with the configurations
- when updating the firmware, requires the user to be able to push a button on the unit and start the process at the Windows Console (for me, I was across the room and need the assistance of another person)
- when the unit drops its network connection, the process stops and the system needs to be completely rebooted and the Windows application needs a forced quit
- with the cost of annual updates, the up front cost savings will be lost after 4 years, when the price of this product surpasses the DeepSpar Imager price

GNU ddrescue:

- can be a pain to get compiled
- command line can be tough to figure out for a novice user
- without Linux/Unix knowledge, it is easy to get the devices mixed up

	DeepSpar Disk Imager	Atola Imager	GNU ddrescue
Software Interface	DOS (Windows via DOS terminal with Forensic Edition)	Windows	Linux / Mac OS / Windows (using Cygwin) / BSD / Unix
System Interface	IDE (supplied PCI-E1x ATA Controller)	Gigabit Ethernet	n/a
SATA Source	Yes (with supplied adapter)	Yes	Yes
IDE Source	Yes	Yes	Yes
USB Source	Yes (requires Forensic Edition)	No	Yes
SATA Destination	Yes	Yes	Yes
IDE Destination	Yes	Yes (with adapter)	Yes
Image Specific Files	Yes (NTFS with good \$MFT)	No	Yes (if file system accessible)
Image data areas only	Yes (NTFS)	Yes (NTFS/FAT)	No
Head Map	Yes	No	No
Image by Head	Yes	No	No
Able to switch between specific DMA and UDMA modes	Yes	No	No
Set sector range to mirror	Yes	Yes (requires multiple sessions that don't cross reference the same sector map)	Yes (not by sectors, rather by Bytes)
Image to file	Yes (requires Forensic Edition)	Yes (via Network connection)	Yes
Skip 'x' number of sectors	Yes	No	No
Image to network drive	No	Yes	Yes
Reverse clone	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hardware reset	Yes	No	No
Visible sector map	Yes	No	No
Stored Configuration Data	On the destination drive or on a 3rd connected drive.	Case management database	No
Set Max LBA on Destination	Yes	No	No
Power Oscilloscope	Yes (Optional add-on)	No	No
Time to read sectors Oscilloscope	No	Yes	Maybe (OS dependant)
Head and Media Test	Yes	No	No



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Customer Comments

Paul Cotton

[Microsoft Canada](#)

"I want to express my thanks for the service that you provided my daughter in recovering the data from her Dell laptop hard drive.

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Read Ignoring ECC	Yes	No	No
Checksum Calculations	MD5 (Forensic Edition)	MD5, SHA1, SHA224, SHA256, SHA384, SHA512	No
Set Read Timeout	Yes	Maybe	No
Log of bad sectors	Yes	Yes	Yes
E-Mail Notification	No	Yes	No
Force read in PIO Mode	Yes	Yes	No
Set read block size	Yes	Yes (the system slows down significantly with smaller block sizes)	Yes
Customizable algorithms (Set read response based on individual sector read errors)	Yes	No	No
Disable SMART operations	Yes	Maybe	No
Turn Off "Read Bad Sector" auto reallocation	Yes	Maybe	No
Disable read look ahead	Yes	No	No
Reset HPA	Yes	No	No
Enable/Disable overwrite unread sectors	Yes	No	No
System Boot Time	23 seconds	2 minutes 40 seconds	Depends on the OS
Write protection	Yes	Yes (toggle switch on unit)	Yes (needs to be setup through the OS)
Wipe destination sector by sector	Yes	No	Yes
Wipe unprocessed sectors	Yes	No	No
Wipe unread sectors on the fly	Yes	Yes	No
Set number of sectors to skip	Yes	Yes	No
Live sector view	Yes	No	No
Healthy 1TB transfer speed	80 MB/second	100 MB/second	70 MB/second (depends on the system)
Approximate Price	\$3350 USD (world wide shipping incuded)	\$2000 USD	Free
Annual Updates	Free lifetime software updates	\$499/year (1st year free)	Free

This review was created based on our experiences.

Recovery Force Data Recovery Services
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