

Mastering your "Master Boot Record"

What is the Master Boot Record?

The Master Boot Record is a small set of instructions located at the very beginning of the Hard Disk, that tells the computer about the hard disk, how many partitions are on the disk, and initiates the process for loading the operating system. The whole process starts with the Master Boot program referencing the partition table to determine which partition is used for booting. It then hands over control over to that partition's boot sector, which continues booting up the computer.

Repairing the Master Boot Record

Like other parts of your computer, it can become corrupt and/or damaged as well. Unfortunately, the Master Boot Record cannot simply be fixed like say a Virus Infection. A Master Boot Record corruption requires a boot disk, as the Hard Drive is usually unbootable. However, once you have managed to boot the computer up using a boot disk, there are many tools and programs that are available to help you recover the Hard Drive's Master Boot Record.

The most common of these are the **"FIXMBR"** command and the **"fdisk /mbr"** command. These commands do what they imply, they repair the Master Boot Record.

Be forewarned though, there are a few precautions that should be adhered to prior to using this command.

1. Run a VirusScan on your Hard Disk with an updated and current AntiVirus product.
2. Check all your computer hardware for failures.
3. Make sure that all your data is backed up. It is equally important to ensure that the integrity of your data is intact.

What if I run it more than once?

The commands for repairing the MBR do one thing and one thing only, they rewrite the Master Boot Record. If you were to run these commands numerous times, they would just rewrite the MBR over and over again. Nothing more.

"The MBR (which is always located on the first sector of a hard disk) contains that disk's Master (or Primary) Partition Table; often the only partition table on many PCs today. The partition table comprises only 12.5% (64 bytes) of this 512-byte sector."

<http://thestarman.pcmistry.com/>

Wrapping up

Repairing your Master Boot record can save your computer, but you need to know what you are doing. Always remember to take precautions for data preservation before attempting any computer repair. You will be glad you did.

Chad Rushka



604-272-3607

604-803-2824

chad@tsgcs.ca

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