

Using Recuva to Restore Deleted Files on Windows

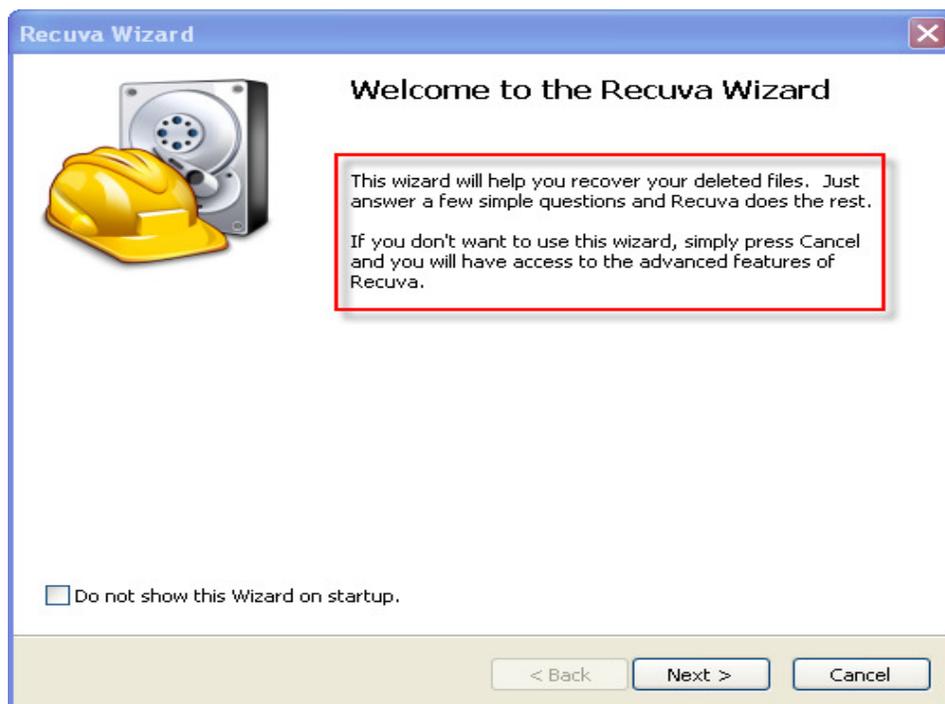
Ronald Ross
ross@spkaa.com

Today we will have a look at a tool which can recover deleted files. Losing files or deleting them by mistake is an unsettling experience. Fortunately, solutions exist to address this situation. Today, I'll be talking about Recuva, which is put out by Piriform, a utility which can recover deleted files. As is usual for many free software packages, you can also pay for personal and business support, but why not start out with the free download and see what it can do? Downloads for both free and supported versions of Recuva are at:

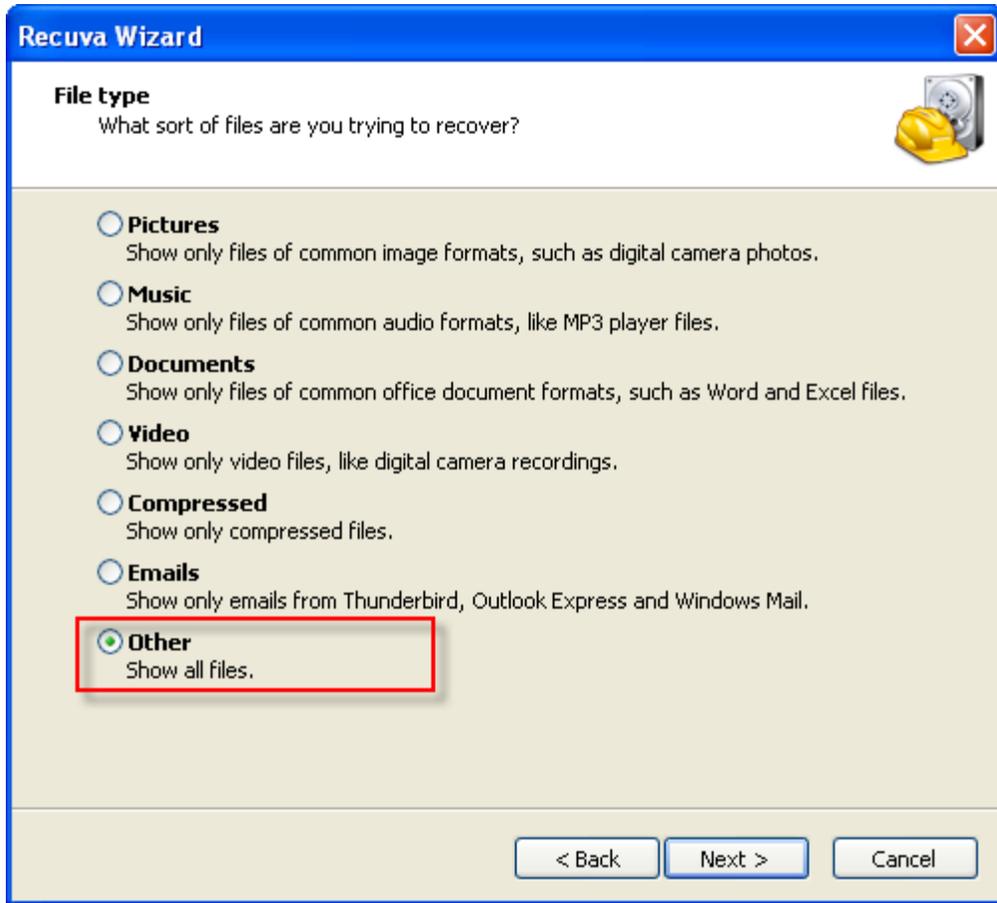
<http://www.piriform.com/recuva>

We won't go through the download and install process, since it's pretty self explanatory after clicking on the link above. Let's just launch the tool and have a look at what it can show us.

In the initial Recuva pop-up, we read how the tool can help us. Let's use the wizard and see what it can do. Click Next.



We are going to let Recuva find all deleted files, so we select Other from the list of options. If you have a more limited search in mind, by all means select the option that best describes what you are looking for. Click Next.



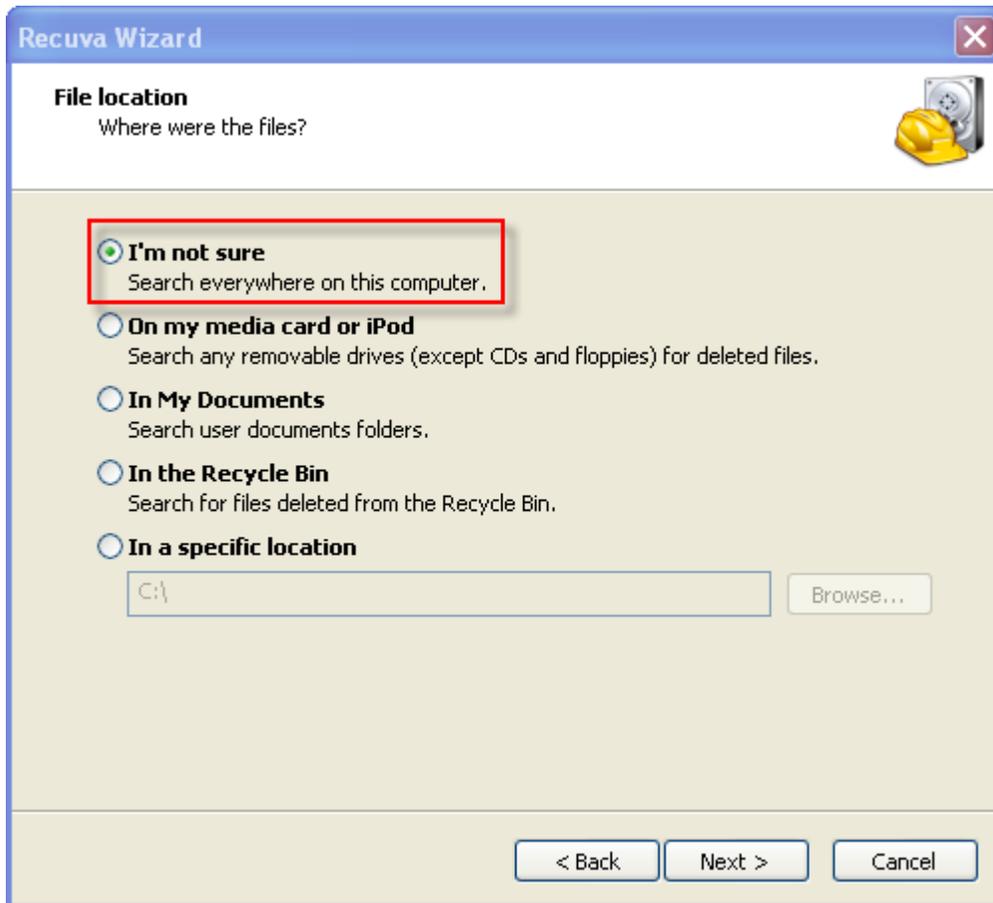
Recuva Wizard

File type
What sort of files are you trying to recover?

- Pictures**
Show only files of common image formats, such as digital camera photos.
- Music**
Show only files of common audio formats, like MP3 player files.
- Documents**
Show only files of common office document formats, such as Word and Excel files.
- Video**
Show only video files, like digital camera recordings.
- Compressed**
Show only compressed files.
- Emails**
Show only emails from Thunderbird, Outlook Express and Windows Mail.
- Other**
Show all files.

< Back Next > Cancel

Again, here we select the option which gives us the largest possible list of possibilities, for the sake of this demonstration. The “I’m not sure” option will begin a search that is not limited to any particular location on the computer. In your particular situation, it may be more appropriate to select “In My Documents”, or “In the Recycle Bin”, for example. Click Next.



Recuva Wizard

File location
Where were the files?

I'm not sure
Search everywhere on this computer.

On my media card or iPod
Search any removable drives (except CDs and floppies) for deleted files.

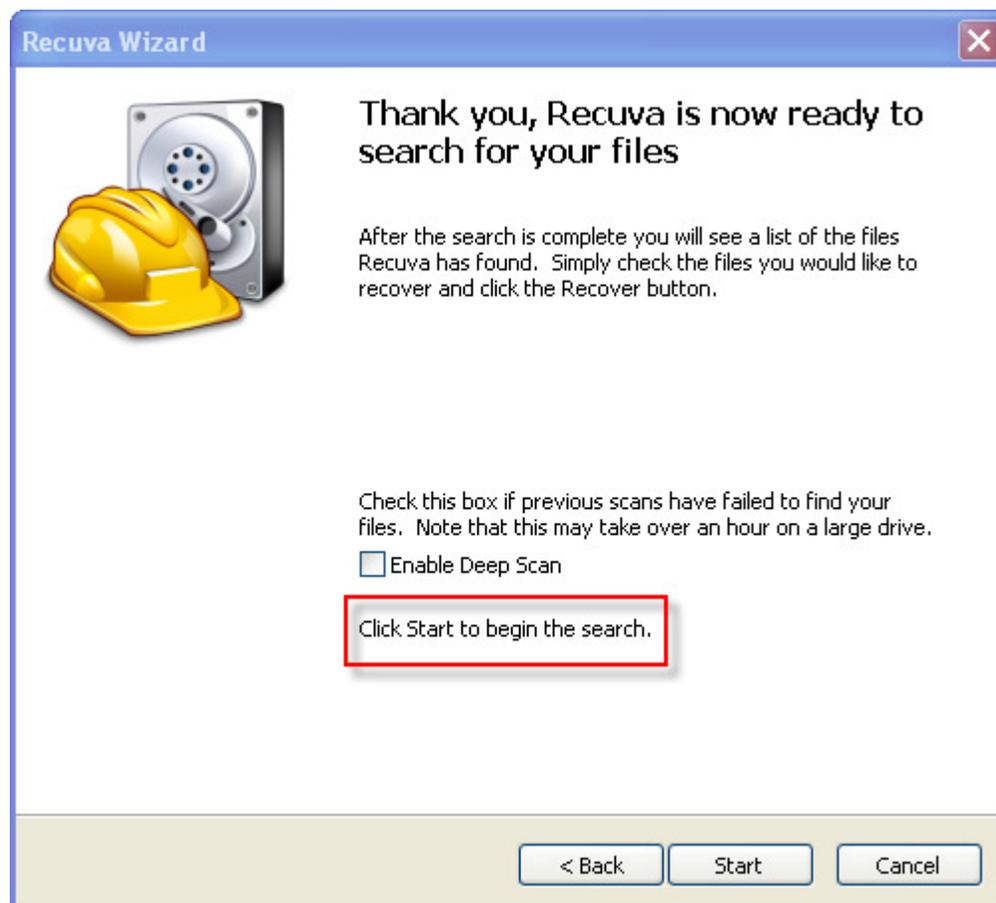
In My Documents
Search user documents folders.

In the Recycle Bin
Search for files deleted from the Recycle Bin.

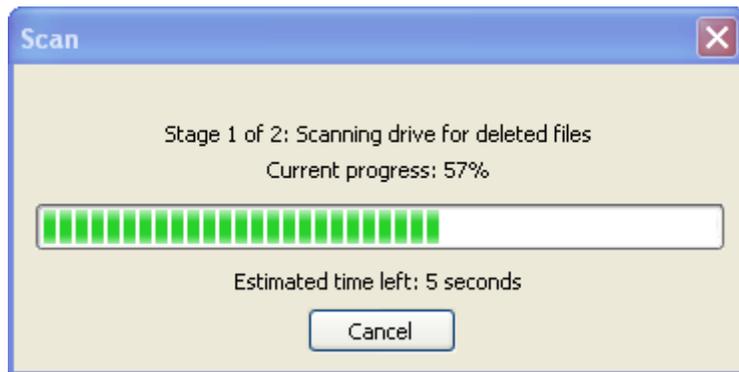
In a specific location
C:\ Browse...

< Back Next > Cancel

Here we note that there is another option: Enable Deep Scan. Recuva will usually locate your file without using the Deep Scan option, but if it doesn't, try again using this option. The main difference here is time. If you're in a hurry, don't select the option. If the file is not found, or if time is not an issue, select the Deep Scan option for the most accurate and comprehensive result. Click Start.

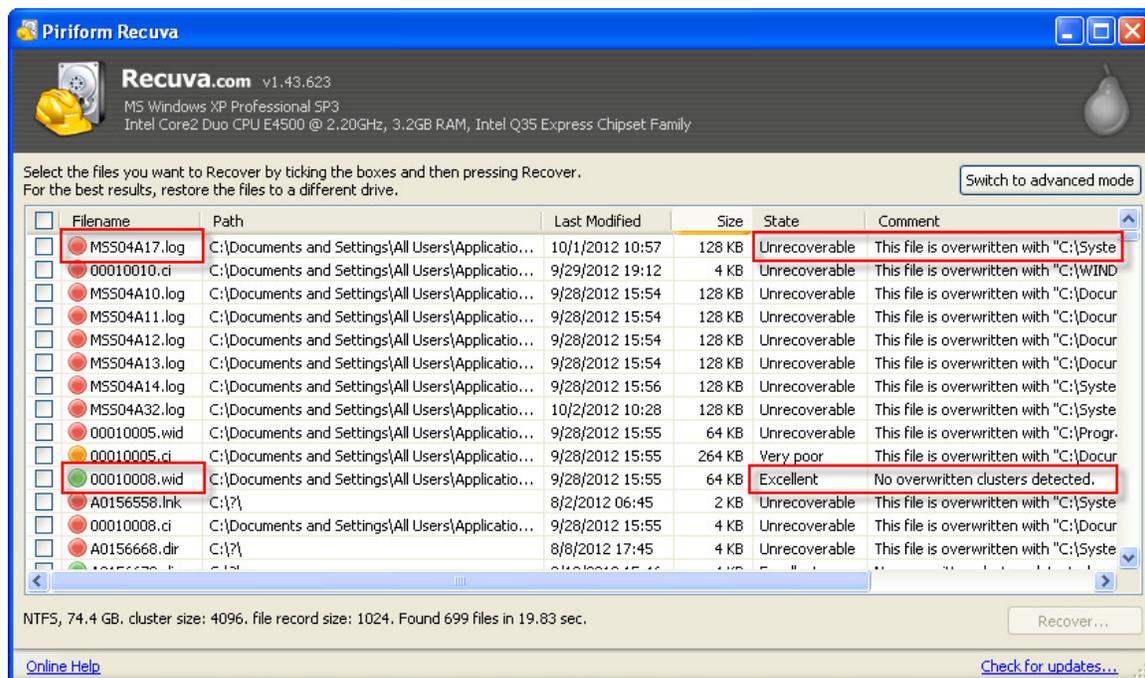


Recuva then makes a couple of passes over the computer storage to locate missing files:

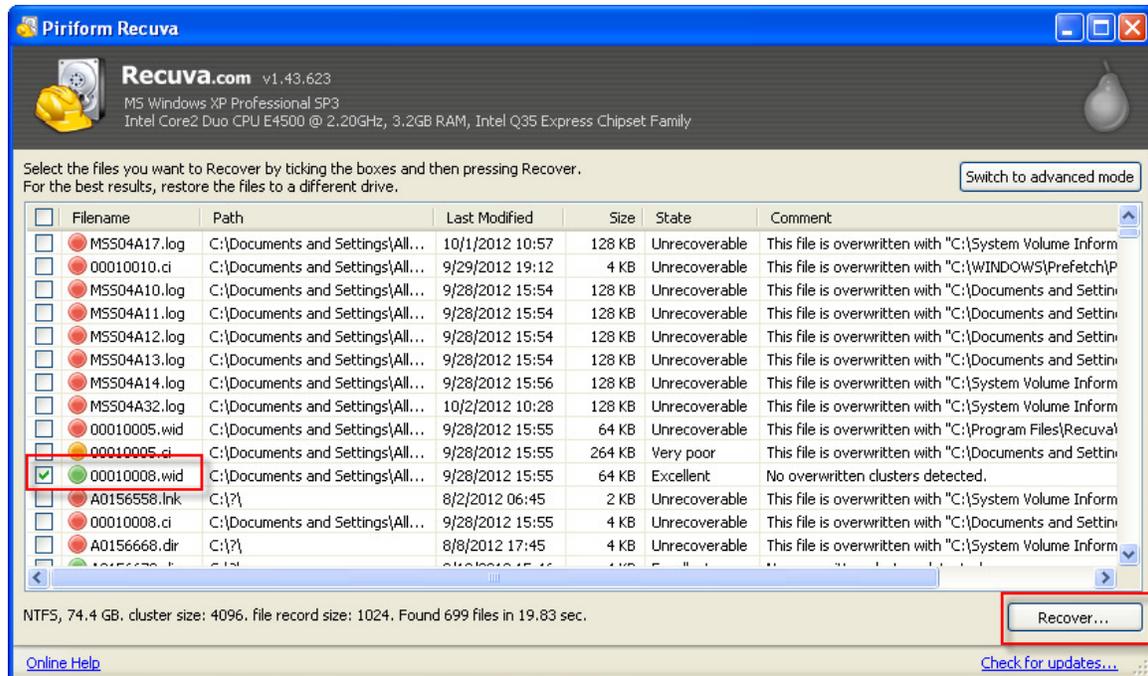


And below we see example results of deleted files found by Recuva. Note that files are designated by color, red, yellow and green. In the example below, we see the first highlighted file designated as red. Looking to the right, we see that its state is believed to be unrecoverable, although you can try to recover it, and maybe some portion of the file might have useable data. Chances are, however, the data is lost.

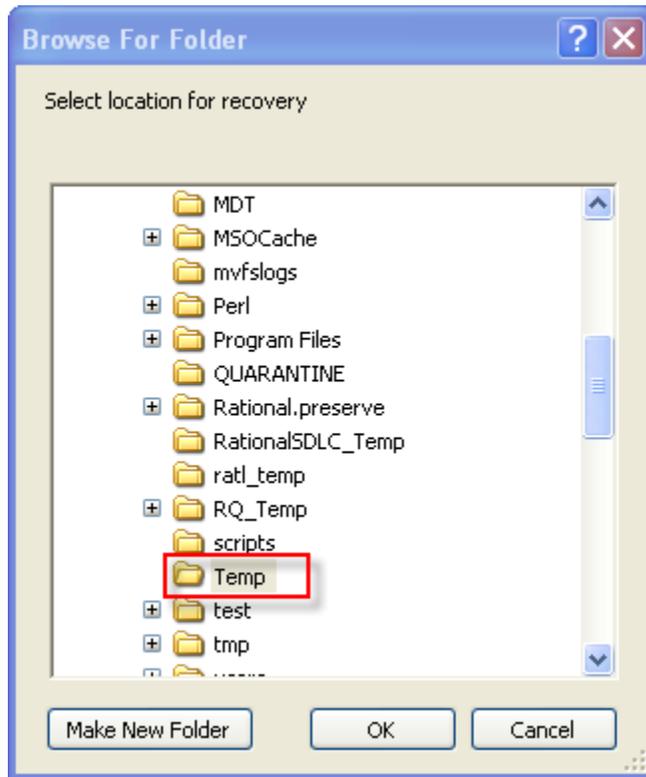
The second file highlighted is green, with “excellent” chances of recovery. The longer a file remains lost and unrecovered, the greater the chances that it will be overwritten by some other file and become unrecoverable. Let’s recover this file in the next screenshot.



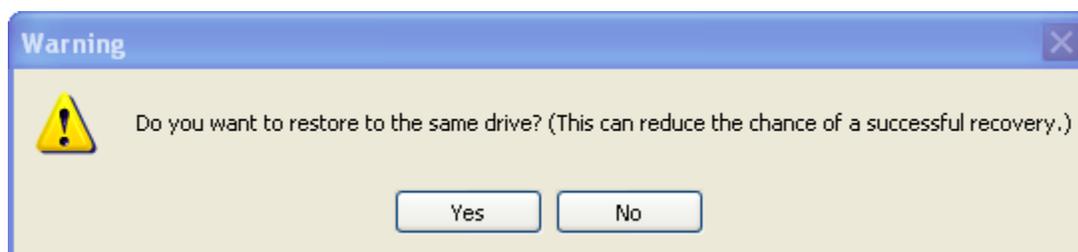
Here we take the step of recovering a file, which has been designated as green. Check the tick box next to the file, and click the Recover button in the lower right hand corner of the dialog box. The next screenshot shows the next pop-up which designates the destination folder for the recovered file.



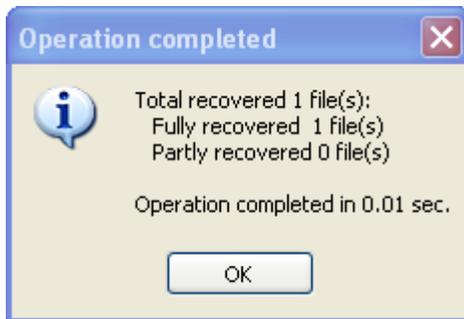
Once the file recovery is initiated, we need to say where the recovered file will be located. In this case, we designate C:\Temp



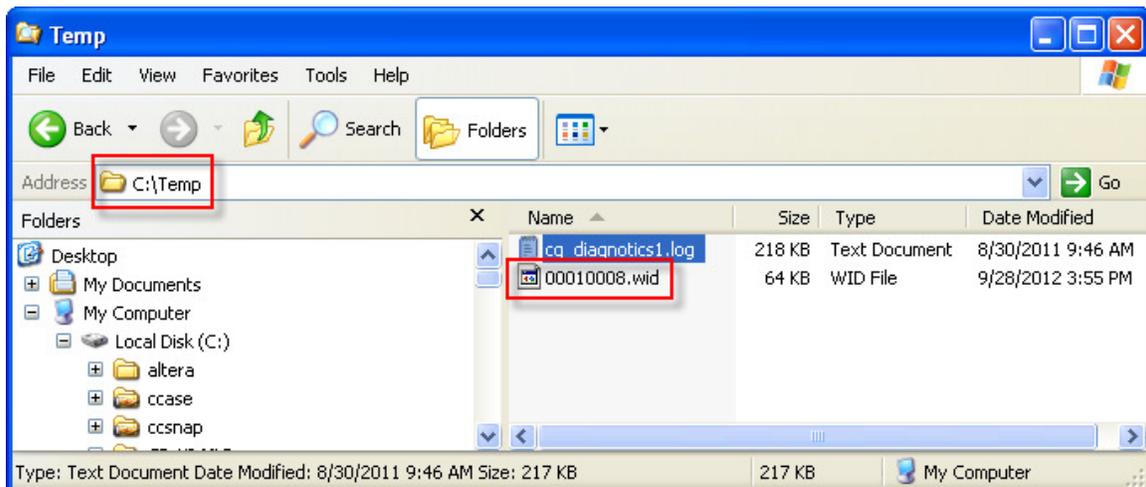
This next pop-up tells us that the best way to recover a file is to target a folder on some other drive, like a USB flash drive. The reason, obviously, is that we will be writing to the same storage unit where the lost file is located. Any additional writes to this storage device involves the chance that the recovered file might be overwritten. For our purposes, we will take this chance, and click Yes to proceed.



And here we see the results of our recover operation. We have a total of 1 recovered file, and it was fully recovered. We were successful. Let's now look to see what we have in the next screenshot.



Here in Windows Explorer, we see the file we selected in Recuva for recovery now placed in the C:\Temp folder. Recuva has performed as advertised.



There is even more to Recuva, here is a brief list of what is available:

- Word files can be recovered after a crash because Recuva rebuilds the file from the temporary files that Word uses.
- Recuva can find lost files on any writable media, whether it is a USB flash drive, hard disk drive (HDD) or even a iPod.
- Lost pictures on your camera's memory? Insert the card into your computer's applicable bay and mount it. Recuva support Nikon's RAW and Canon's RAW (.CRW) formats.
- Deleted email can be recovered from email programs like Outlook, Thunderbird, etc.



www.spkaa.com
Ph: 888-310-4540

SPK and Associates
900 E Hamilton Ave, Ste. 100
Campbell, CA 95008

- After a hard disk crash, Recuva uses the hidden index present on the drive to quickly locate your files.
- Even after doing a NTFS Quick Format, Recuva can still find your files (unless they have been overwritten).

Hopefully what you get from all this is that Recuva is a good un-delete program that can prove very useful to you when you find yourself in a jam due to missing or deleted files. Download it, install it, and give it a try. It's always good to have tools like this available when the unforeseen emergency occurs.