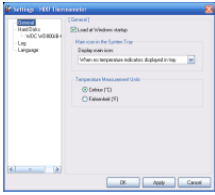


21 August 2006

By: Ionut Ilascu, Editor, Software Reviews



## [HDD: Rare, Medium Rare or Well Done?](#)

### *Keep your HDD cool*

How many times have you postponed a health control because of your busy schedule or for the simple fact that you were not in the mood? I do it all the time. What about your computer? Do you know its health state? I bet that most of you think about viruses and other sorts of malware. Wrong!!!! am talking about the physical state of your most used components. Do you know that certain environmental factors influence the duration of your hardware lifespan? Let's take for example your hard disc. I am sure that you think that nothing could go wrong in there. But, "Better safe than sorry", a wise man once said. A hard disk drive (HDD) is a data storage device that uses platters for records the information. Each platter has a smooth magnetic surface where the digital info is stored. We all know that the hdd is sensitive to physical damage. But it is also sensitive to heat, along with other components of your system. If the CPU reaches a certain temperature, the system will shut down automatically (of course you have to make the settings in the BIOS). With hard disks, this thing does not happen (maybe because most people think that it is a less important component), although you may lose precious data because of overheating. I read on a forum once that somebody's hard disk's platters were seized in place because of a fan fail. This is why you must always choose your computer case with care and make sure that it has perfect ventilation for all the components. Also you have to pay attention to the type of motherboard (pick one with heat sensors) and set the BIOS to shut down the computer if a certain temperature exceeds. For those less fortunate, or those who think that all the above is a too complicated task, there are software that display the temperature of your computer components. HDD Thermometer is a hard disk temperature monitoring tool from RSD Software. It is a freeware so you can download it without the worry that the license will expire. The software has no main interface and once installed, it will begin its activity immediately by displaying the hard disk temperature in the system tray. Right click the "hot" icon in order to reach to the "menu" of the software. You can choose to make the settings for the HDD Thermometer or the hard disk. I will present only one of them as they are the same and the changes made for one of them will also take effect into the other. The first tab of the Settings menu is the General one. The user can set the software to load at Windows startup (recommended) the main icon displaying in system tray and the temperature measurement units (Celsius or Fahrenheit). Next is the Hard Disks tab where you make all the necessary settings for the temperature levels, temperature control and poll interval. The settings you make in here are available for each hard disk that is configured to use common temperature settings. In temperature levels you can make the settings for the normal, warning and critical temperature. In normal you can only set the color of the icon displaying the temperature. The Warning tab allows you to set the warning temperature level (I set it at 45 degrees Celsius) and also the temperature display icon's color. In the Critical tab, the user can make exactly the same settings as in Warnings tab. It is desirable to set different colors for the temperature levels so that you notice the change. As info on Critical hard disk temperature, you should know that you must never allow your disk to reach this stage as it can lose data or even crash. The user can set any time interval to take the hard disk temperature. The temperature poll interval can be set from every second/minute to every 100 seconds/minutes. In Temperature Control tab, the options are somehow different, the software allowing the user to prevent the hard disk damaging. In this respect you can set the application to play a sound when reaching the warning or critical temperature, show a notification, execute an external application or even make the "Power off computer" settings (hibernate or shutdown). **The GoodA** software that comes free and it has a high utility

degree is always appreciated as a good thing. The software is easy to use and does its job great. You can use it even if you have more than one hard disk installed on your computer. The software will detect all the hard disks and you can make settings for each fix disk you have. The user can view the temperature logs which include the day, and hour of the temperature change. **The Bad** The temperature notification balloon (available in Windows XP and 2000) is displayed immediately after the hard disk exceeds the warning and critical values. **The Truth** The software is a great utility for monitoring the hard disk temperature. It will register the temperature of your storing devices and it will shutdown the machine if a certain temperature is reached. *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*