

Hard Drive Life Expectancy

JULY 20, 2022 BY ANDY KLEIN

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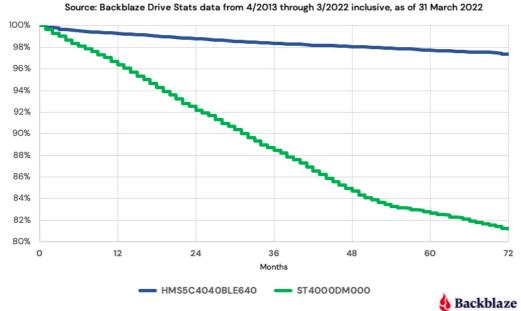


For the last several years, we have written about **drive failure**, or more specifically, the annualized failure rates for the hard drives and SSDs we use for our cloud storage platform. In this post, we'll look at drive failure from a different angle: life expectancy.

By looking at life expectancy, we can answer the question, "How long is the drive I am buying today expected to last?" This line of thinking matches the way we buy ma Valoramos su privacidad **CONFIGURACIÓN** failure rate of 19/ is academically interesting NextRoll, Inc. ("NextRoll") y nuestras 18 redes publicitarias asociadas usan cookies y tecnologías similares en este sitio y usan datos personales (por ej., su dirección IP). Si da su consentimiento, se podrá almacenar o tener acceso a las cookies, los identificadores de dispositivos u otra información para los fines descritos a continuación. Puede hacer clic en "Permitir todo" o "Rechazar todo", o hacer clic en la opción Configuración para personalizar su consentimiento con relación a los fines y funciones para los cuales se procesarán sus datos personales y/o los socios con quienes compartirá los datos personales NextRoll y nuestras redes publicitarias asociadas procesan los datos personales para: • Almacenar u obtener acceso a información en un dispositivo; • Crear un perfil de contenido personalizado; • Seleccionar contenido personalizado; ● Anuncios personalizados, medición de anuncios e información de audiencia; ● Desarrollo de productos. Para algunos de los fines anteriores, nuestras redes publicitarias asociadas: • Usan de geolocalización precisa. Algunas de las redes asociadas dependen de nuestros intereses empresariales legítimos para procesar datos personales. Visite nuestras redes publicitarias asociadas si desea otorgar o denegar su consentimiento a socios específicos, revisar los fines para los cuales cada socio afirma tener legítimo interés, y oponerse a esos Si selecciona Rechazar todo, aún podrá ver el contenido de este sitio y seguirá recibiendo publicidad, pero esta no estará personalizada para usted. Puede cambiar la configuración siempre que vea la By clicking "Accept All Cookies", you agree to the sto PERMITIR TODO **RECHAZAR TODO** navigation, analyze site usage, and assist in our mark https://www.backblaze.com/company/cookies.ht



Kaplan-Meier Life Expectancy Curves for Select Backblaze 4TB Drives



What Is the Graph Telling Us?

- 1. If you purchased an HGST drive at time zero, there is a 97% chance that drive would still be operational after six years (72 months).
- 2. If you purchased a Seagate drive at time zero, there is an 81% chance that drive would still be operational after six years.





Fair question. At the time we were purchasing these Seagate and HGST drive models back in 2013 through 2015, there were no life expectancy curves and Drive Stats was just starting. We had anecdotal information that the HGST drives were better, but little else. In short, sometimes, the pricing and availability of the HGST was good enough so we bought them.

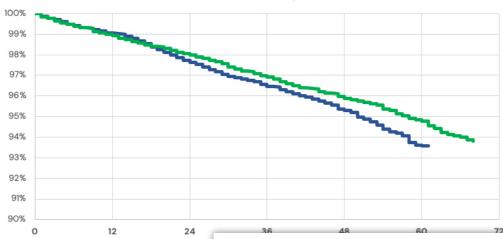
Comparing 8TB Drives

The two 8TB drives we've chosen to compare using life expectancy curves **have done battle before**. The 8TB Seagate model: ST8000DM002 is classified as a consumer drive, while the 8TB Seagate model: ST8000NM0055 is classified as an enterprise drive. Their lifetime annualized failure rates tell an interesting story. All data is as of March 31, 2022.

Туре	Model	Drives in Operation	Lifetime Drive Failures	Lifetime Drive Days	Lifetime AFR
Consumer	ST8000DM002	9,678	628	19,815,919	1.13%
Enterprise	ST8000NM0055	14,323	915	24,999,738	1.35%

Let's take a look at the life expectancy curves and see what else we can learn.

Kaplan-Meier Life Expectancy Curves for Select Backblaze 8TB Drives Source: Backblaze Drive Stats data from 4/2013 through 3/2022 inclusive, as of 31 March 2022



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A Word About Drive Warranties

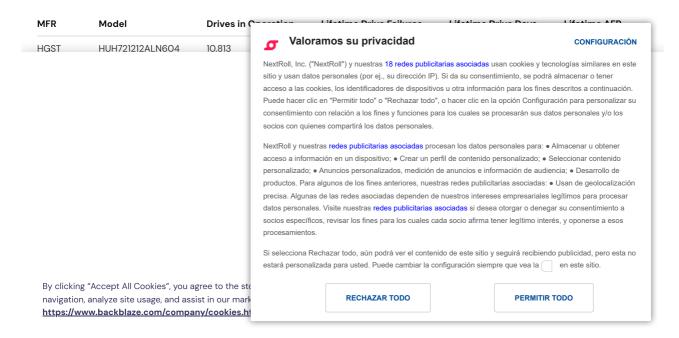
One of the advantages we get for buying drives in bulk from a manufacturer or one of their top tier resellers is that they will honor the warranty period ascribed to the drive. When you are buying from a retailer (typically an online retailer, but not always), you may find the warranty terms and conditions to be less straightforward. Here are three common situations:

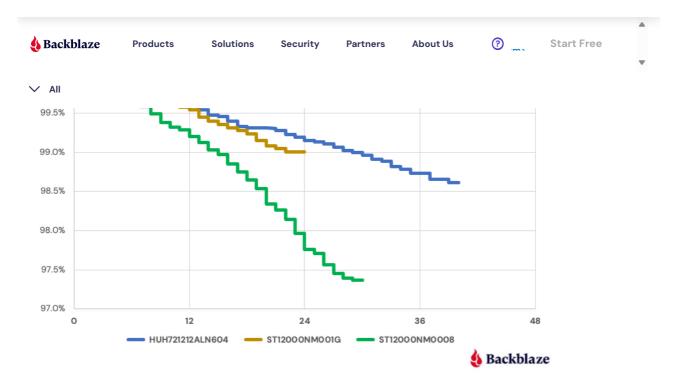
- The retailer purchases the drive or takes the drive on consignment from the manufacturer/distributor/reseller/etc., and that event triggers the start of the manufacturer warranty. When you buy the drive six months later, the warranty is no longer "X" years, but "X" years minus six months.
- The retailer replaces the warranty with their own time period. While this is usually done for refurbished drives, we have seen this done by online retailers for new drives as well. In one case we saw, the original five-year warranty period was reduced to one year.
- The retailer is only a storefront while the actual seller is different. At that point, determining the warranty period and who services the drive can be, shall we say, challenging. Of course, you can always buy the add-on warranty that's offered—it's always nice to pay for something that was supposed to be included.

As a drive model gets older, these types of shenanigans are more likely to happen. For example, a given drive model gathers dust awaiting shipment while new models are coming to market at competitive prices. The multiple players on the path from a drive's manufacture to its eventual sale are looking for ways to "move" these aging drives along that path. One option is to lower or eliminate the warranty period to help reduce the cost of the drive. The warranty becomes a casualty of the supply chain and you, as the last buyer, are left with the results.

Comparing 12TB Drives

If you are serious about storing copious amounts of data, you're probably looking at 12TB drives and higher. Your Plex media server or eight-bay NAS system demands nothing less. To that end, we selected three 12TB models for which we have at least two years worth of data to base our life expectancy curves upon. The Drive Stats data for these three drives is as of March 31, 2022.





Observations and Thoughts

For any of the three models, at least 98% of the drives are expected to survive two years. I suspect that most of us would take that bet. While none of us wants to own the one or two drives out of 100 that will fail in that two years period, we know there are no 100% guarantees when it comes to hard drives.

That brings us to asking: What is the cost of each drive, and would that affect the buying decision? As we've noted previously, we buy in bulk and the price we pay is probably not reflective of the price you may pay in the consumer market. To that end, below are the current prices, via the Amazon website, for the three drive models. We've assumed that these are new drives and they have the same warranty coverage of five years.

- HUH721212ALN6O4 \$413
- ST12000NM001G \$249
- ST12000NM0008 \$319



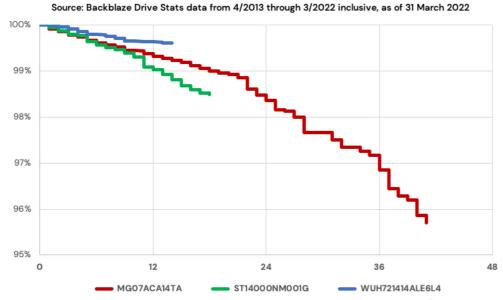


✓ All

the life expectancy curves for the same models.

MFR	Model	Drives in Operation	Lifetime Drive Failures	Lifetime Drive Days	Lifetime AFR
Toshiba	MG07ACA14TA	38,210	454	19,834,886	0.83%
Seagate	ST14000NM001G	10,734	123	4,474,417	1.00%
WDC	WUH721414ALE6L4	8,268	35	3,941,427	0.33%

Kaplan-Meier Life Expectancy Curves for Select Backblaze 14TB Drives



Observations and Thoughts

All three drives have a life expectancy of 99% or more after one year. Previously, we examined the **bathtub curve for drive**

failure and made the observation that the

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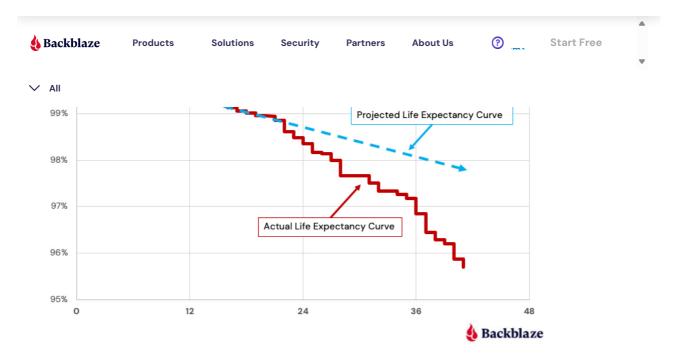
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The projected life expectancy curve line is derived by extending the random failure rate from the first 22 months. That said, 97% of the Toshiba drives survived for three years while the projected number was 98%, or simply put, the failure rate was one drive per hundred more over a three-year period.

Interested in More Drive Stats Insights?

Physical disk drives remain essential elements of business and personal tech. That's why Backblaze publishes performance data and analysis on 200,000+ HDDs: to offer useful insights into how different drive models stack up in our data center. As SSDs increasingly become the norm in many computers and servers, Backblaze is now also sharing data for the thousands of SSDs we use as boot drives.

- Check out our 2021 Year-end Drive Stats Report.
- Read our first SSD-based Drive Stats Report.





✓ All

Standing on the Shoulders

Using our Drive Stats data in combination with Kaplan–Meier curves has been done previously in various forms by others including Ross Lazarus < https://bioinformare.blogspot.com/>, Simon Erni < https://hackernoon.com/applying-medical-statistics-to-the-backblaze-hard-drive-stats-36227cfd5372>, and Tom Baldwin < https://baldwint.com/backblaze-survival/>. We thank them for their collective efforts and for providing us with the inspiration to produce the current curves that enabled the comparisons we did in this post.

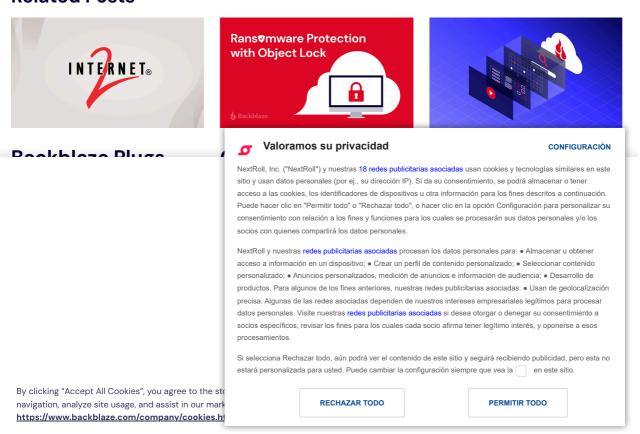


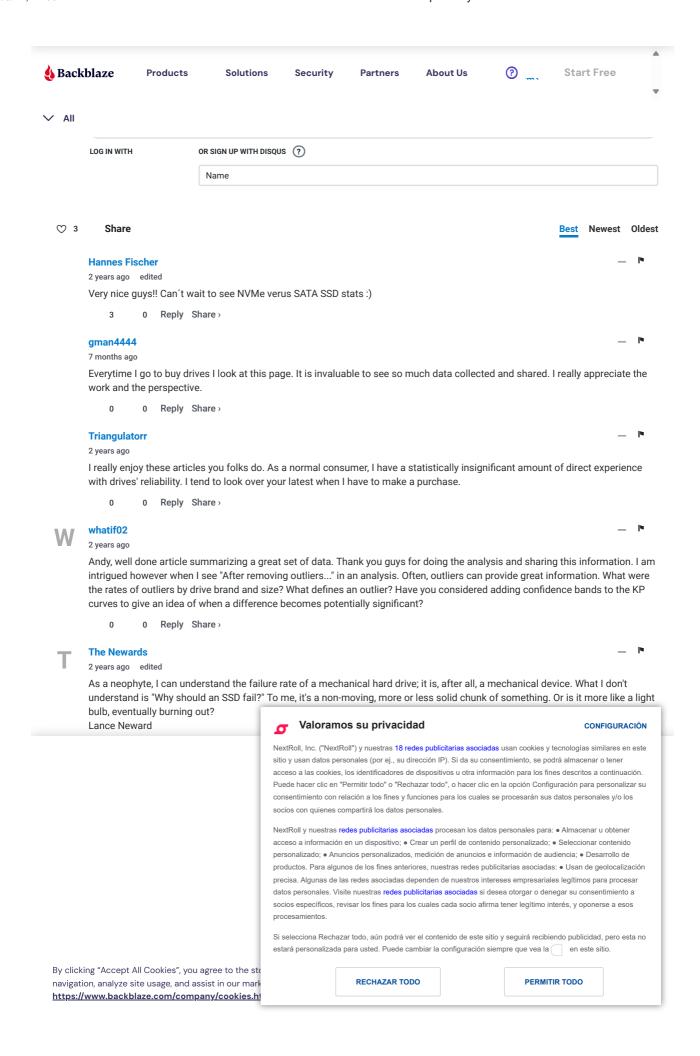


About Andy Klein

Andy Klein is the Principal Cloud Storage Storyteller at Backblaze. He has over 25 years of experience in technology marketing and during that time, he has shared his expertise in cloud storage and computer security at events, symposiums, and panels at RSA, SNIA SDC, MIT, the Federal Trade Commission, and hundreds more. He currently writes and rants about drive stats, Storage Pods, cloud storage, and more.

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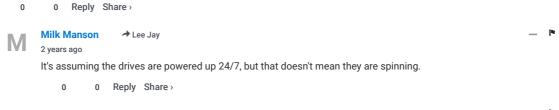






That's assuming the drives are spinning 24/7. What if they are used, say, three times a week for an hour? Then startup/shutdown transients and thermal cycling might be a driver.

I've been buying and using hard drives since about 1985 and I've had exactly two hard drives fail in all that time. But exactly zero of them ran 24/7.



Christopher Placak

2 years ago edited

I learned BEFORE the year 2000 to NEVER buy any brand of hard drive besides IBM. IBM sold the hard drive division to Hitachi and the level of quality remained supreme. Hitachi Global Storage [HGST] then sold the hard drive division to Western Digital. The level if quality still remains at the top of the industry. I think of all the nightmares I and associates of mine experienced with Seagate and Western Digital drives and going farther back to Quantum, Conner, Micropolis and Maxtor. What I cannot understand is why does Western Digital have a problem bringing their own brand of drives up to the same quality standards as the HGST drive division that they acquired? Enough of reminiscing. I buy few hard drives anymore and instead have hundreds of SSDs, solid state drives, and have found them to be incredibly reliable. Long live RAID 10. I just love those arrays from Adaptec/Microsemi and Avago/Broadcom/LSI with sustained read/write rates of 7,000 megabytes per second.



Hitachi Global Storage [HGST] sold the 2.5" hard drive division to Western Digital. 3.5" went to Toshiba.

Either way though, your question assumes WD was trying (and failing) to produce higher quality drives. Big assumption.





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