Popular Threads on Solosez

Giving Away PC - How Best To Clean

I'm giving an extra computer, a 1 year old PC, to a relative. What's the best way to clean it out and start with a clean slate?

I'm thinking of just taking the computer back to the folks that fabricated it for me in the first place (http://www.computernyc.com) and have them remove the old hard drive and put in a new one... Should I first clean out the old hard drive? How? Is it worth saving the old as an "extra"?

Any other... better ideas? Anything I'm overlooking?

BTW, it has a P4 chip, 240 GHz CPU and 480 RAM (built-in video card on motherboard hogs some RAM) - Runs XP-SP2 - Old hard drive is 80 gig. Any data/files I wanted from the old PC have been transferred to my new PC already.

Thanks in advance!

Arthur Miller, New York, New York

Recommended both to you and to all my colleagues:

http://www.heidi.ie/eraser/

Freeware.

Mike Koenecke, Richardson, Texas

I've used DBAN (Darik's Boot And Nuke) program to wipe client's (when I did computer consulting) computers prior to selling or giving them away. It can be put on a floppy or a bootable CD-R and is free. http://dban.sourceforge.net/   William Devine, II"
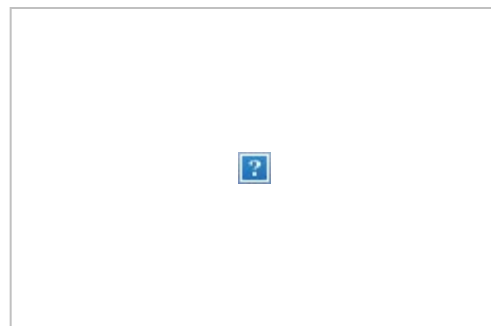

Before it boots to Windows, hit the F8 or F12 key (varies with computer) and stop the boot. Get to a DOS prompt c:\

Then type "format c:"

It will ask you if you are sure you want to do that, just say yes and that is about the best way to do it (absent paying a forensic guy to clean it of all data).

TJ Thurston, Illinois

Subscribe to Solosez

First Name

Last Name

E-mail Address

Submit (input element)

Unsubscribe from Solosez

E-mail Address

Submit (input element)

Books

Click on the book for more info

-----

1) remove hard drive 2) past photo of Bill Gates on it 3) Get Hammer 4) Place hard drive on hard surface 5) Begin hitting hard drive with hammer while reciting the mantra: "Take that Gates for selling crappy operating systems at too high of a price" (or make up your own - this ain't a religion, exactly) 6) Through away hard drive 7) give computer away and have new owner buy harddrive and operating system and programs.

Art Mouton, Louisiana

I have to admit I once had a PC which died suddenly and painfully...a secretary opened an email in error instead of deleting and a virus appeared dramatically. One which hit worldwide some years ago and downed the computer system for the British Parliament too, among others:)) I had a party and invited lots of friends, including computer gurus. We all had a great time bashing the PC with a sledge and taking out our respective frustrations on it. PC was a wreck and the party a great success!

Alan P. Bernstein

When you reformat your hard drive you should have your recover disk that you were suppose to get when you purchased your computer. Your could use thoes to get it back to the original state when you took it out of the box. On some computers, you have to make them, if you forgot and its a HP, it will run you about $20 and a half hour on the phone with HP.

TJ Thurston <tj@thurstonlawpc.com> wrote: Before it boots to Windows, hit the F8 or F12 key (varies with computer) and stop the boot. Get to a DOS prompt c:\

Then type "format c:"

It will ask you if you are sure you want to do that, just say yes and that is about the best way to do it (absent paying a forensic guy to clean it of all data).

TJ Thurston, Illinois

Install a new hard drive and smash the old one with a hammer. Hard drives are very inexpensive and easy to install.

Robert Schrage

If you want true security you either have to take a hammer to it or use Department of Defense-Grade multiple re-write formatting program.

Dan Nguyen

If you wish to protect confidential files, perhaps reformat the hard drive to wipe out everything on it and use the recovery cd supplied to restore it to original configuration.

Alan P. Bernstein

Go to the start menu, programs, and then "System Recovery." You will be prompted to choose between: (1) reinstallation of just the operating system without the loss of your files, such as documents or email; or (2) a complete recovery that erases all data and reinstalls Windows XP.

If you want to ensure that the hard drive has been completely and permanently wiped clean, go to killdisk.com. The software is free and works very well. After wiping the hard drive, reinstall the operating system with the Windows XP cd that came with the computer.

Shannon Foye, Houston, Texas

If you want to keep the old one and use it yourself as an extra, then you don't need to do anything. If you want to let them use it as an extra or a main drive, my advice is - don't. Hard drives are cheap enough that they should just get a new one and you should take the old one out.

If you are not going to use the old one at all, my advice is to destroy it. That is the only way you can be sure that data will not be recovered.

David Tarvin

I disagree with that, not only because it is wasteful but because it is not true. I defy any agency to recover meaningful data from a hard drive which has been wiped securely with commonly available utilities which overwrite in multiple passes with random data. Sure, it's common to talk about how the boogiemen at the FBI can recover data from disks which have been erased, overwritten four hundred times, then perforated by shotguns, but I frankly think that's anecdotal nonsense.

Run a "boot and nuke" utility like DBAN (http://dban.sourceforge.net/), repartition and reformat the drive, reinstall an OS, and only God Himself will be able to figure out anything that was on there previously.

Mike Koenecke, Richardson, Texas

[Back to Popular Threads](#)